

PUNCH SEPTEMBER 30 1969

VOL XXXIV

9d



BENSON and HEDGES

Super Virginia



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BENSON & HEDGES LTD

PUNCH

Vol. CCXXXVII No. 6209
September 30 1959



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Subscriptions

If you wish to have *Punch* sent to your home each week, send £2s. 16. Od.* to the Publisher, *Punch*, 10 Bouvierie Street, London, E.C.4.

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The London Charivari

KHRUSHCHEV'S piece of glee-ful if heavy-handed repartee to the effect that "we will bury you" seems to have assumed almost Pearl Harbour proportions in the minds of our American friends. Unless reason prevails, there is a danger that it will find its way into history books along with other such nameless horrors as the crime of Benedict Arnold or the Rape of the Sabine Women. The Russian leader's remark cannot exactly be described as gay and friendly, even when its actual meaning is spelt out in words of one syllable: but the extraordinary thing about the whole affair was the fact that solemn, grown-up, important American personages failed to recognize in it a fairly simple figure of speech, and gave themselves the horrors by taking it literally. Is it possible that there are diplomats in Washington who are still trying to work out the meaning of Mr. Churchill's more fanciful wartime images?

On the Other Hand . . .

AMERICA's distinguished guest has taken offence so often and so easily, the wonder is that he didn't threaten to fly



home because Mrs. Khrushchev hadn't been invited to join the Daughters of the American Revolution.

All Right for the Weeds

THE interruption of the dry spell was celebrated by *The Times* with a report under the heading "Farmers' Joy at Rainfall," and readers had a fleeting image of red, laughing faces and gaitered legs dancing merrily on the green. Actually, what the farmers



seemed chiefly to say was that they weren't out of the wood by a long chalk, that a little rain was worse than none, that they needed a month of it and that, anyway, "no amount of improvement now can lessen the burden on winter fodder supplies."

Who Said Suez ?

IT is going to be a little tiresome if all the chip-on-shoulder nations follow the example of Egypt and start celebrating with military march-pasts those far-off occasions when they bled the noses of British redcoats. Let's face it: the roll of places from which we have been thrown out in the past three hundred years is a long one, ranging from Kandy to Buenos Aires.

The British *débâcle* in Egypt which President Nasser's men have been celebrating occurred in 1807. It is chastening in the extreme to recall some of the other operations which were mooted, but mercifully not attempted,



"Yes, the Tories have a good record—but so too, for eight years, have the Socialists."

at that period. "Weathercock" Windham, the War Minister, had an unusually hare-brained plan for the reduction of Chile; Lord Grenville wanted to loose a two-prong attack on Mexico; and Sir Arthur Wellesley drew up plans for an assault on, of all places, Venezuela. What fearful victories might these nations be celebrating to-day!

Kerbing Expenditure

A SWEDE has invented a parking meter you take with you. From time to time you nip into a police station, pay your parking fees in advance and have the portable meter adjusted. And then, for the next week or two, you make use of parking zones wherever you can find free space, remembering to start the meter each time you leave the car. This will please critics of untidy street furniture, as well as making life a little easier for motorists. All we need now to change Subtopia into Utopia is the introduction of telescopic street lamps for night-time parking, inflatable rubber bollards for wifely garaging, and roll-it-yourself zebras for rush-hour treks to off-side tobacconists.

Mixed Classes Only

THE centrepiece of a Fleet Street stationer's window just now is a blackboard announcing "Everything for the New Term," surrounded by pens, ink, exercise books, geometry sets and a selection of wedding stationery.

Could Have Heard a Bomb Drop
Izvestia writers have had a hard time putting the best face on Mr. K.'s Western approaches, but they hit a nice vein in reporting that in Washington "there was not even room to drop an apple in the streets." Naturally, they didn't go on to say that if anyone had dropped one you could have heard it.

Round Every Corner

ONE of those investigations, this time on behalf of a Temperance organization, has been peeping into the stresses that produce abnormal behaviour in women; it was the oddness of the norm that interested me—a maximum of five cigarettes a day and one drink and one cinema visit a week. On this showing I have to admit that I prefer my women abnormal; or perhaps it's time for an investigation into the abnormality of pollsters? There are plenty of accessible samples about just now.

Off the Street

WHICH raises another point. Without thumbing through the pages of the Street Offences Act I am not clear about the position of a young woman who, being employed by some poll or other, comes up to a man in the street and asks him a lot of questions about how he intends to vote. Is she

accosting him? If not, how is some watching policeman to know that, despite the poised paper and pencil, the questions she is asking are not of the "Got a light, ducks?" type? If she is, in law, accosting him, are we soon to see the pollsters driven off the streets and reduced to sticking up their questionnaires in tobacconists' windows? Now that would make them look independent.

Putting Your Name Down

I HAVE complained before about the publications in which the centre or left-wing parties display their goods. Surely it ought to be easier to buy the Liberal and Labour Election manifestos than *not* to buy them. Yet last week, well after they were published, I could not buy them from three railway bookstalls or a street bookstall. If anybody says I might have tried ten places instead of four or waited patiently till they turned up on the counter, I say "The hell with it. Why should I?" The Conservative manifesto was available and that seems a fair point scored for the Conservatives.

Woids, Woids, Woids

THE TV bombardment of Britain by the American language is much more intensive than ever Hollywood achieved, and I can't help wondering how many children are going back to school saying, "I've brought my new football boots," or, "We gotta eat, don't we?" It may not be possible to blame even TV for the Old Vic's advertising last week, when it told the newspaper-reading public that it was presenting *As You Like It* "Monday thru Thursday" . . . but at least the play wasn't called *The Way You Wannit*.

Records Galore

WELL, now we know. This summer has been officially proclaimed the driest of the century and (according to the British Waterworks Association) "possibly the driest ever recorded." Can this really be the work of Supermac, or is it in fact the result of the temporary abandonment of nuclear tests? If our summers revert to normal next year France and De Gaulle are going to be pretty unpopular.

—MR. PUNCH



"Funny thing—I'd give anything for a provocative question."



"Which way did Dr. Gallup say I'd vote?"

THE ROAD TO 1984

*A series of probes for proles.
This week's subject is . . .*



Capital Gains By SIR HALFORD REDDISH

IT has been said that an essential qualification for a politician is the ability to foretell what will happen to-morrow, next month and next year—and to explain afterwards why it didn't.

An industrialist, on the other hand, while he must forever be looking ahead and "taking a view," normally keeps his conclusions to himself or at any rate within the business family. Happily for him he is seldom called upon to prophesy in public. So I dip a very timid toe into the water before I take the plunge and try to foresee the pattern of industry in this country a quarter of a century hence.

Taking a plunge involves sticking out the neck. I do not believe that the civilized world will destroy itself in a war fought with nuclear weapons. I do not believe that the instinctive common sense, or the reactionary prejudice or whatever you call it, of the British electorate will permit an extension of nationalization (or whatever you call it) whether by the front door or the back door: I believe that by the time a Labour Government again takes office nationalization, and therefore Socialism, will have been discreetly buried and find no part in its legislative programme. (Ought I to "declare my interest" and

say (a) that I am not a Socialist; and (b) that I refuse to put my head in the sand and affect to ignore the impact of party politics on industry?) And I have faith in a continuance of the inventive genius of our race which has in the past—the Russians can claim what they like—far exceeded that of any other country. Lastly, I proceed on the hope (optimism triumphing over experience?) that sane government will keep inflation at bay, will resist the temptation to debase the currency by the use of the printing press, and that full employment will mean just that and not a body of workers fully paid but under-employed.

In the comparatively short period of twenty-five years I see three factors likely to have an appreciable influence on our industries:

- (1) The shift of purchasing power as a new middle class comes to maturity.
- (2) The trend of population here and overseas.
- (3) The dramatic developments in scientific progress.

We in this country are living through one of the great revolutions of history: a bloodless one certainly, if we ignore (as for most practical purposes we appear to) the steady slaughter on the roads; but a revolution in the production and distribution of wealth made possible by the hard work, the accumulated capital and industrial wisdom of past generations and by social progress. It has eliminated extreme poverty and is giving birth to a new and very large "middle class."



"You'll have to wash right round, my lad, when you go to the Comprehensive!"

This is undoubtedly a healthy development. It is fairly safe to say that it will continue.

The higher earnings now achieved by most weekly wage-earners must have far-reaching economic consequences in other spheres beside the gramophone and boys' clothing industries. It is this new middle class to which the country must look for a much greater proportion of the savings, the raw material of capital, on which industry depends. Much saving by this part of the population has in the past gone directly to finance Government expenditure through the National Savings movement. To-day, when Unit Trusts and other devices are increasingly channeling these savings into the risk-bearing Ordinary shares of our industrial companies, it is clear that the wage-earners will want to keep a keen eye on what is being done with their money, and this will perhaps prove a stabilizing influence economically. And politically too. Nearly a century ago a Liberal Chancellor said "We are all Socialists now": by 1984 it may well be that "we are all conservatives now"—though with a small "c". The politician's dream of a property-owning democracy is already taking shape. And as more and more workers in industry become shareholders in our large industrial companies we shall hear less of nationalization in the narrow ideological sense of the word. What I think we *shall* see is an extension of public ownership through a more widespread holding of Ordinary shares.

A second effect of this revolution in purchasing power will be (indeed is already apparent) a movement in favour of quality rather than cheapness. Bread and circuses are giving way to cake and television; the cheap and filling but boring foods of a century ago are less in demand to-day in spite of the increase in population, while more expensive foods find an ever-increasing sale. (Wider Continental travel has no doubt played a part in refining the appetite.) No longer does the average housewife look first for the cheapest article simply because it is the cheapest. Here surely is a signal to our manufacturers, particularly manufacturers of what the economists call "consumer durables."

Then again the broader basis of this purchasing power will lead to wider and more effective demand from this



growing "middle class." It is a commonplace that the luxuries of to-day become the near necessities of to-morrow, and of course as demand grows production is increased and costs are reduced.

Although I feel that economic pressures may ultimately cause a decline in the population of these islands, nothing of this is likely to show in the next twenty-five years. Indeed, estimates made not so long ago of a virtually static population during this period have already been revised to indicate a modest increase. But in the British territories overseas, in the Commonwealth countries and in the Colonies alike—and I assume there will still be a few—large increases of population are foreseen. This in itself proclaims opportunities for the manufacturers and industrialists of the United Kingdom not only by way of increased exports—by which alone, let us remember, we in these islands can

live—but also in many cases for the setting up of manufacturing branches overseas.

The future of the United Kingdom in relation to the Common Market of the six European countries, or of any possible free trade area such as is at present under discussion, is anything but clear; but I have little doubt that some working arrangement with other Continental countries will come. Though this may change the pattern of world trade, it must also add to the opportunities opening up for our own industries; and a free enterprise economy should have the foresight, the willingness and the ability to adapt itself to change. Witness to-day Lancashire's courageous efforts to turn from traditional textiles no longer economic to new and more rewarding manufactures.

We live in an era when scientific discovery is surging forward at a

hitherto unprecedented pace. "This here progress," as H. G. Wells's Mr. Smallways observed, "it keeps going on." The wheel has had a very long run; steam-power had a very much shorter one before it was trumped by electricity, with almost infinite applications; and comparatively soon afterwards the splitting of the atom gave birth to a vast series of new possibilities for the future—some cheerful, others rather less so. In many other fields—aeronautics, medical and surgical science, plastics and man-made fibres, to name but a few—progress has been equally fast.

In some directions the very speed of scientific development at the present time seems to be outrunning the capacity of the world (which, alas! must still devote a large proportion of its production to armaments of one sort or another) to provide the vast capital sums required for the peaceful application of science's discoveries. Colour television is delayed because of the capital already invested in black and white. The supersonic airliner will come, but only when the airlines of the world can afford to scrap the expensive jets with which they are only just now being equipped. No manufacturer to-day is big enough to produce a supersonic airliner for commercial use "on spec" and firm orders are not yet a practical possibility. But as Admiral Lord Fisher once said, the best scale for an experiment is twelve inches to the foot.

There are some who think that soon—perhaps within a generation—we shall live in a push-button era, with most of the world's work done by machines, and the hours of human employment a mere fraction of those

worked to-day. I do not agree. If such an age did come and turn us all into layabouts and middle-age pensioners we should soon perish from boredom.

So I conclude, subject to the provisos with which I tried to cover myself at the outset, that 1984 will still find us with plenty of work to do—and Parkinson's Law still valid!

And who knows? By then we may rely

on *The Economist* for our humour and on *Punch* for our economic forecasts.

Other contributors to this series will be:

WILLIAM CLARK
DESMOND DONNELLY
ELSPETH HUXLEY
LUDOVIC KENNEDY
SUSAN STRANGE

In an Embassy Drawing Room

The Select Committee on Estimates, in its recently published report, finds that insufficient emphasis is being placed on the military attaché's function of promoting the sale abroad of military equipment.

YOUR Excellency knows that it has long been our desire
That cordial relations should continue to obtain.
Our two great nations must, in peace, to greater things aspire.
(And had you heard, last week we sold a hundred tanks to Spain?)

Your Excellency realizes peace is good for trade—
A field in which Your Excellency's countrymen excel.
I hope, sir, their prosperity continues unalloyed.
(It happens that we've just brought out a rather novel shell.)

But if one might advise you, sir, you ought to move with care:
Do not be too complacent, I most earnestly beseech.
Our enemies surround us, we must each of us prepare.
(Complete with atom war-heads, barely half a million each.)

For one has heard it rumoured, sir, from sources close to Bonn
That soon a Russo-German pact will prise the West apart.
And what's our fate, sir, when the North Atlantic Treaty's gone?
(I think that we could let you have say twenty, for a start.)

One feels, in fact, Your Excellency would be well advised
To recommend your Government to purchase instantly.
The threat to your security should not be minimized.
(Plus ten per cent for you, old boy, and ten per cent for me.)

— KEITH STYLES



Naked Stalemate

By BERNARD HOLLOWOOD

A Press Round-up on Khrushchev's Disarmament Proposals

FROM the *Labour Torch of Freedom* (incorporating the *Leftist Gazette*):

"How, one may ask, are Mr. Khrushchev's proposals to be put into effect? Not, one hopes, by putting all arms into cold storage and vats of Vaseline. (Remember the trouble the Home Guard had in 1940 degreasing those lend-lease American rifles!) No, they must be put right out of harm's way, and what better device for this purpose is there than the space rocket? Once agreement has been reached the Great Powers should arrange a time-table for the dispatch of all lethal weapons into the vasty cosmos. First small arms, flick-knives, truncheons, and so on; then tanks, flame-throwers, bomber and submarine parts; then tactical nuclear weapons; and finally the I.C.B.M.s themselves.

"These dastardly implements of destruction would orbit the earth for ever as a constant reminder of human fallibility and a figurative epitaph on fratricidal folly.

"The very slight risk of all this hardware being annexed by beings on another planet can surely be overlooked."

From the *Wall Street Globe-Mercator*:

"Mr. K.'s fine words will deceive nobody. Total disarmament would obviously play into Russian hands by

disrupting the foundations of Western economics. American steel is cheap because we produce in bulk by neotechnic mass-production methods. America is able to assist underdeveloped nations because output, based on capacity assembly-line manufacturing processes, is the highest in the world.

"We, like the Utopian dreamers and Nuclear Disarmament campaigners, reject war as a method of solving international disputes, but we are none the less wedded to a free economy. What possible harm can nuclear bombs do if they are never, in any circumstances, to be used?

"If Mr. K.'s irresponsible pronouncement was meant to upset our markets he will be disappointed. Steels are standing up well; electronics, though bearish at the moment, are two to three Dow-Jones points up on last year; and United Explosives, at 112-115, are yielding a cool 23 per cent (ex div.)."

From the *White Democrat*:

"How much more effective and convincing Mr. Chairman Khrushchev would have been if his U.N. disarmament talk had included some reference to the satellite nations groaning under the heel of the Russian bear. What cynical nonsense it is to talk of scrapping arms when all the world knows that Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and so on can only be kept on their backs by the repeated employment of Communist bludgeons?"

From the *New Materialist* (incorporating *Woman's Thought*):

"Complete and universal disarmament would obviously give the Russians, with their enormous manpower, a definite advantage in Europe, for total disarmament would not necessarily prevent war. What is to prevent the Russians, unarmed, from marching west in their millions? The peoples of Western Germany, Italy, France, Holland and of course Belgium would put up a fierce resistance and there



"When suddenly it hit me, gentlemen—the perfect design for stereophonic listening."

would be many tough hand-to-hand struggles . . .

Renewed outbreaks of wrestling are reported from Lille, Frankfurt and Milan. Strong Russian reinforcements are said to be limbering up

The French fisticuffs fighters held up a probing detachment of Soviet maulers last night in the outskirts of Lyons. Wrestling continues.

Belgium has appealed, through her Ambassador in London, against the Russian use of the double arm-lock in fighting round Liège. This hold has been condemned by United Nations and voluntarily abandoned by all signatories of the Berne Convention—including the U.S.S.R.

American relief parties have made a welcome appearance on the Western Front, where casualties during the past few days have been extremely heavy. The hospitals and first-aid posts report many new cases of slipped disc, sprained ankle, dislocated shoulder-blade and pulled muscle. Supplies of emulsion and splints are being rushed in from Canada.

Russian liners packed with troops were boarded in mid-Channel during the night and stiff hand-to-hand fighting took place. After suffering numerous black eyes and torn ligaments the Ruskies agreed to retreat. But more trouble is only to be expected.

A message from Medicine Hat states





that 'hordes of Russians and Chinese' are marching across the frozen northern sea on their way to Alaska. This new threat to the U.S. has the Pentagon worried; doubts exist about the toughness of the ordinary American male and a national campaign has been launched to popularize Soccer and Rugby League football.

In Holland the Russians have wrestled forward eighteen miles in the last few days and are now within a half-nelson of taking the Hague . . .

From Now and Again:

"Total, naked disarmament on the K plan would surely defeat its own ends. We were given brains to use not to lie idle. Man's genius reaches to the summit in some of his warlike inventions, and it would be a denial of his birth-right if he were to revert to a primitive state of defencelessness. Nay, more: by disarming he would soon lose the faculty of inventiveness and so become a prey to the evils of want, neglect, despair and inertia. In the past man has always, miraculously, accepted the challenge of change and adapted himself physically and mentally to the hazards of scientific progress. We are cowards if we now lose faith in our ability to evolve a race capable of surviving (and enjoying!) the adjustments in our daily life prompted by nuclear contamination and disintegration. Let Mr. K. think again!"

From the *Sempiternal Sterling and Roy Harrod Review*:

"We disarm. Our factories close down. Unemployment. We absorb the unemployed in 'peaceful' Industries subsidized by Government money. To get rid of these goods we are forced to give aid to other countries. Aid in massive doses. But other nations have the same problem, and we in turn are asked, required, to receive aid. Chaos.

We exist by taking in each other's unwanted washing. Industry and banking become disheartened, apathetic. Nobody wants to buy wordy articles from classical economists. Economists become disgruntled. Down tools. More chaos. No, it won't work. Not practical."

From *Memory Weekly*:

"The last Nobel prize should go to Mr. Khrushchev."

Colour Exposed

By C. OWEN THOMAS

STATISTICS can be made to prove anything, including the fact that it costs £31 5s. 4½d. for five-eighths of a person spending a holiday abroad to produce one good colour transparency.

Look at it like this; one and a half million people holiday abroad annually, and we can safely assume that each one exposes the equivalent of two full-length rolls of 35mm film, or say three million films in round figures.

Irrelevant, but interesting, is the calculation that each length being 1·6 metres, if all were spliced together there would be a strip of film 4,800 kilometres

long, or roughly 3,000 miles. This would be sufficient to stretch from Brondesbury to Brindisi and back; unspliced it would be much more difficult, as each length would have to be tacked down at intervals, and that couldn't be done across the Channel, now could it? Which is about as convincing an argument as any we have heard lately in favour of a Channel Tunnel.

But to get back to statistics, our hypothetical three million rolls of film would be divided into about two and a half million monochrome—black-and-white to you—and half a million colour film. Now this amount of colour film

ought to produce eighteen million transparencies.

Fortunately for those people who don't go abroad, and are subsequently expected to admire these masterpieces, it doesn't quite work out like that for the following reasons:

Exposed with lens cap on	36
Overexposed	5,678,910
Underexposed	4,567,890
In favour	2,345,678
Against	1,234,567
Don't know	1,122,334
Independent and others	1,050,585
Carried forward	16,000,000
	2,000,000
	<hr/>
	18,000,000

Don't run away with the idea that all the two million carried forward are worth looking at; by no means as there are sure to be:

Out of focus	765,432
Unsharp owing to camera shake	654,321
Heads cut off	354,678
Feet cut off	123,456
Gendarme or other uniformed official walking in front of lens at the crucial moment	2,112
Carried forward	1,899,999
	100,001
	<hr/>
	2,000,000

Strange mishaps can befall even the most carefully exposed transparencies, as the following figures show:

Lost in post on way to be processed	36
Inadvertently sent for processing without having been exposed	37,983
Put through camera twice thus double exposing from end to end	37,982
Carried forward	76,001
	24,000
	<hr/>
	100,001

Before we go any further let's consider the financial aspect of all this. On our Dr. or "outgoings" side we must put down £750,000 for the cost of half a million colour films, thus:

Cr.	Dr.
750,000	0 0

On our Cr. or "Income" side we could put down anything which accrued as a result of indulging in this enterprise, and we find the following "sales":

1 Transparency sold (for blackmail probably)	26 5 0
3 ditto sold to Photographic Magazine	22 1 0
Total receipts	£48 6 0

Back on the debit side we find a small item in the petty cash, previously overlooked, to wit £1 1s. 0d. for expenditure on three duplicate transparencies, which were made from the one we sold for blackmail (before it was handed over to "Mr. X" of course) and this modest figure includes Surveyor's Fees and Stamp Duty. Any additional income from the further sale of these to "Mr. X" for blackmail purposes will be carried forward to the new account, and are represented on the Balance Sheet by the appropriate entry under "Goodwill."

Our Trading Account now reads as follows:

	Cr.	Dr.
Excess of	48 6 0	750,000 0 0
Expenditure		1 1 0
over Income	749,952 15 0	
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	£750,001 1 0	£750,001 1 0

Now let us refer to the item of 24,000 transparencies carried forward, and we remember that we have disposed of four, while another eleven have been accepted

at camera club exhibitions and not yet returned to senders, leaving us with a net total of 23,985 which cost £749,952 15s. 0d. to produce, or £31 5s. 4½d. each.

Which is almost Q.E.D. but not quite, as we still have to account for our five eighths of a holidaymaker. This is a simple division sum of 24,000 over 250,000, which for some odd reason doesn't give us anything like five-eighths. Oh, well it's quite simple—we probably left off a couple of noughts somewhere right at the beginning.

With those comments, Ladies and Gentlemen, we have much pleasure in submitting this account for your approval.

Another interesting sidelight emerges from this statistical dementia; although in the opinion of the selection committee there are only 23,985 transparencies worth looking at, all available 17,999,912 (counting double exposures as "2" and blanks as "nil") will undoubtedly be shown to an average of ten friends. If each "friend" views each transparency for an average of only one minute, we have a total viewing time of some three million viewer-hours, which must make an appreciable cut in time spent watching TV.

In a future report we hope to produce some figures showing the consumption of gin and canapés during viewing, and draw some interesting conclusions *in re* the dependence of the caterer on the camera-per-capita calculation.



Political Portents

Psephologists (literally students of pebbles, because voting used to be done with pebbles) claim to forecast the result of an election by analysing one of the first polls declared, often Kettering. But why wait till then? There are still plenty of reliable portents, too lightly dismissed by scoffers in this materialist age.

The Wisdom of the Shires

COUNTRY folk, watching weather and wild life over the centuries, have garnered a store of wisdom denied to the unseeing townsman. To them indeed there are sermons in stones, and they don't mean psephological ones. Nor do they neglect observation of the wider world.

When turmut vly sit tight and won't come off it

The Liberal deposit's well-nigh forfeit.

Recalling this familiar west country couplet a Devonian small-holder with a long memory mentioned that when the great Liberal decline set in a few decades ago his root fields were so ravaged that villagers called them the Black Forest. He now grows mangolds, swedes and turnips only during the middle hey-day of an elected government, and many shrewd yeomen follow his example. Radicals should carry their sprays at the alert between now and October 8.

*Ilka thistle maks pur neighbour,
Ill-prickit sward maks muckle Labour.*

The crofters who often quote this proverbial jingle affirm that though it was originally conceived, no doubt, as an exhortation to good husbandry, a lush growth of thistles was noticed repeatedly to coincide with Socialist success at the polls, and modern right-wing highlanders mobilize heavy flame-grenade artillery to destroy, albeit reluctantly, their national emblem when election time approaches. Thistle-down may show which way the wind blows next week. (Another example of traditional Caledonian verse acquiring a political



Statue of Mr. Ephraim Twigg,
Member of Parliament for
Brassingham East . . .

patina is "There's nae luck aboot the Hoose when my Guidman's awa'," which enjoyed a cynical revival of popularity when a Scottish Nationalist Member named Goodman went into the wilderness, followed by a spate of harsh legislation unfavourable to salmon-poachers and deer-slayers.)

Special note may be made of this bit of rural lore for it has not improbably influenced the timing of elections:

*When Janiveer be frote and hoary,
Come Shrovetide, England will be Tory.*

Early left-wing intellectuals, quick enough to mock at this "old wives' tale," as they dubbed it, changed their tune when a succession of severe frosts soon after Christmas were succeeded rhythmically by heavy by-election loses in Lent. Though not admitting the "superstition," they promoted inter-party talks which led to agreement on the now customary October election. They argued that the absence of any reasonable rhyme to October except "sober," which is neither here nor there politically, was an insurance against any new doom-laden saws being thought up by blimpish yokels.

Divination

There are, of course, many more sophisticated methods of predicting election results than these. To name only a few, there are theomancy, or divination by oracles; bibliomancy, or

divination by the Bible; psychomancy, or divination by ghosts; sciomancy, or divination by shadows; chaomancy, or divination by appearances in the air; genethliacs, or divination by the stars at birth; haruspicy, or divination by sacrificial appearances; ichthyomancy, or divination by the entrails of fishes; sideromancy, or divination by red-hot iron; capnomancy, or divination by smoke from altars; myomancy, or divination by mice; crithomancy, or divination by the dough of cakes; axinomancy, or divination by a balanced hatchet; geomancy, or divination by dots made at random on paper; geloscopy, or divination by the mode of laughing; ceromancy, or divination by dropping melted wax into water; and many more.

Not all of them are equally suited to current use, but some are particularly well adapted for electoral purposes.

Theomancy. The oracle to be watched most carefully is Cross-Bencher in the *Sunday Express*. This oracle will frequently forecast election and by-election results, often giving the Christian names of candidates in full, and exclaiming "For why?" The method of forecasting results by watching this oracle is complex and has little to do with his actual oracular predictions.

Psychomancy. Confident articles signed by Cabinet Ministers are to be observed in the news sheets at this season. These articles are written by



... observed to be the subject of significant attention by floating voters of the feathered kingdom

ghosts, whose behaviour will often give valuable information about electoral progress.

Chaomancy. A recent example of the use of chaomancy has been seen in Russia, where the appearance in the air of a rocket going to the moon is regarded as a certain portent that Mr. Khrushchev is going to be successful in the next Russian elections.

Ichthyomancy. The entrails of fishes, commonly known as caviar, are studied with loving care by electoral experts in such temples as the Carlton Club, the Savoy Grill and so on. An increase in the amount of fish-entrails observable indicates a right-wing victory; a decrease suggests a left-wing victory.

Crihomancy. For example, if the dough of bread-rolls in Northern Ireland were found to contain an unusually high number of holes, this would indicate an increase in the number of Sinn Fein members in the next Parliament.

Axinomancy. The hatchet, or chopper, is balanced over some well-known public political figure, such as Mr. Lennox-Boyd, and if it falls on him it is a certain sign that he will soon be going to the House of Lords.

Geomancy. Dots made at random on paper are generally replaced nowadays by crosses, also made at random, on voting-papers. By counting these up it is possible to know with considerable accuracy the constitution of a Parliament.

These are but a few of the methods available for forecasting election results. Exactly what advantage there may be in knowing the result six hours before it is declared it is hard to say, unless one is about to set up as an oracle and practise theomancy oneself. In this connection it is only fair to say that the profession is pretty overcrowded and the ordinary man in the street will do better to confine himself to inexpensive divinations such as myomancy or gyromancy (divination by walking in a circle).



POLL ON POLLS

(*Punch Poll has the distinction of being the smallest recognized, or recognizable, Public Opinion Poll in the country. It is quite as independent as that run by (say) the "Daily Express."*)

ACROSS-SECTION of the London public was questioned on whether it read, believed, and paid any attention to the results of the Polls published in its favourite newspaper. Of the 100 per cent questioned, 68·1 per cent actually glance at polls, 81·8 per cent believe them genuine, and 72·7 per cent believe that they mean nothing at all. The results for the *Telegraph* are the most positive (as we say in the trade): 100 per cent of readers believe the polls genuine, though 20 per cent do not look at them, and a staggering 60 per cent believe that they signify something. By contrast the readers of the *Daily Express* are lacking in newspaper loyalty: though 100 per cent of readers read the results they publish, a good 40 per cent think it is possible that they are run up by a couple of men in a back office, and only 20 per cent think that the results have any meaning at all. P.P. was lucky in finding a control group of *Daily Mirror* readers: though only 60 per cent of them read the Poll results, all 100 per cent believe them genuine even if they think them meaningless. This seems a thoroughly proper attitude, and gratifying loyalty, in the readers of a paper that does not conduct a public opinion poll.

— P. D.

HINTS FOR HECKLERS

II—THE CONSERVATIVE MEETING

IF we've never had it so good, where's my Post-war Credit?"

"If the Tories get in, will Randolph be in the Government?"

"Why is there enough money to build luxury offices but not one new hospital?"

"A year ago a 6d. exercise-book had forty-eight pages and to-day it has only thirty-two. Is that what the Tories mean by stabilizing the cost of living?"

"Which Ministers would you like to see dropped if the Tories get in again?"

"Are you in favour of giving in to the brewers and relaxing the licensing laws? . . . Oh, you support the killjoys then?"

"Can you give a firm undertaking that Randolph won't be in the Government if the Tories get in?"

"If my boss can take his girl out to dinner on the proceeds of my P.A.Y.E. by calling it a business conference, why can't I get an extra luncheon-voucher to take my own girl out?"

"What are the Tories going to do if Eisenhower and Khrushchev announce that the American visit is the Summit Meeting?"

"Is it true that Charles Hill has been strongly advised to apply for the job of TV Doctor?"

"Are you in favour of introducing Life Commoners so that Lord Hailsham can sit in the Commons?"

"Will this Minister for Science send people to snoop round factory floors with stop-watches?"

"Are the Tories going to invite Makarios to serve on the Monckton Commission?"

"Wouldn't Randolph make just the right British Ambassador for De Gaulle?"

"If the Commonwealth stands for Freedom and Justice, what about South Africa and Hola and the Building Societies' not putting their mortgage-rates down when the Bank Rate went down and Suez and all that coal lying about and the Devlin Report and cold-shouldering Malta and doing research on hydrogen bombs instead of cancer and having advertising in the middle of plays and rearming Germany after we had all that trouble disarming her and the Institute of Directors having its own tie like Eton?"

"How many American ancestors have you?"

— R. G. G. PRICE



"I can't tell you how worried I was when he threatened at one point to pack up and come home early."

South of Town

By R. G. G. PRICE

ONCE the British were divided for literary purposes into Southerners and Northerners. Southerners lived softly in the fat lands between the green and friendly South Downs and the sparkling Thames, where the converted cottages had quaint names and the villagers smiled to see the week-end gentry enjoying themselves. Northerners stood grimly on wind-blackened hill-sides or lent their backs against back-to-backs, talking bluntly

about football or municipal corruption in a dialect consisting mainly of apostrophes. Now the population is shifting sunwards and, as the southern majority swells, it is its own divisions that matter—for example the division between North and South Londoners.

I was brought up within half a dozen miles of Charing Cross on the old Kent-Surrey border, and to me North London had the glamour of being part of a capital while South London

was neither metropolitan and cultured nor provincial and vigorous. People in Hampstead or Chelsea or Camden Town could rub minds with gay high-brows, walk home after a theatre arguing, live next door to people who read new books, and generally behave as though living in Athens or Montparnasse; but for me a visit to London was an occasional, pretty near annual, treat and halfway through the day we were fussing about getting home. Even people who worked in the great city did not bring it home with them.

My memories of that hilly landscape are not of intellectual vivacity but of compulsory fresh air, one of the rages that medicine had before it began curing everything with moulds. When I was six or so I spent a couple of years on a splint and had to be pushed up and down South London in a spinal carriage, a chore made none the easier by my arm-waving and garrulity. There was one pusher over whom I quickly established such an ascendancy that she turned left or right as I directed. I saw a good deal of quite new territory but we arrived back anything up to three hours late and she was not with us long. Apart from my mother, my most indefatigable pusher was a terrifying redhead who claimed that her father had ghosted Spurgeon's sermons. Wishing to ingratiate myself with her I gave her a nickname and chose, I cannot imagine why, "Bosomrang." To her strong muscles and extrovert temperament the carriage was merely a minor impediment to a brisk walk. She was a woman who liked to know everything that was going on. A crowd in the distance always aroused her curiosity and I never had to hang about vainly peering on the fringes. People did not linger in Bosomrang's path when she charged.

I got more mobile as I grew up but I remained a martyr to theories of the value of fresh air. Like some urban dalesman, I scurried up and down the steep streets day-dreaming, or reading first closely-printed booklets about schools that were fully staffed with spies and smugglers and detectives, then lowbrow books about baronets in libraries or beans in spats, and then secondhand books by famous authors of whom I happened to have heard, like Galsworthy or Milton or Petronius or W. W. Jacobs. I followed set patterns in my walks as my mind was filled with

other things. I did not have any idea of the district as a whole or even how the various walks interconnected. Sometimes I would jump, as it were, from one groove to another. It did not make much difference to me if I did happen to pass the same corner three times instead of three corners once, though it was apt to surprise people standing on it, especially as I walked very fast with very short steps and, when I was deep in some fantasy, expressions chased one another across my face.

It is odd to go back and find what my homeland is really like. It is still surprisingly countrified. I can remember after World War I picnicking on local farms, and farmland may well have increased since as big houses decay and their gardens are ploughed up. There are foxes and other predators where the dead wood of fences, that once protected Victorian vintners and merchant bankers from the suburban herd, merges and intertwines with the brushwood of abandoned gardens. There might easily be tribes of returned evacuees, now adult, root-eating and farouche. There is plenty of new building, but they can get quite a large housing estate into the grounds of a single mansion. You can walk on grass for much of the way from Kew to Blackheath via the Crystal Palace, as you can see from a large-scale map, and maps do not show tree-lined roads or wild woodland or the ponies that have been provided by nature to cope with the riding boom.

Blackheath does manage a metropolitan look, probably because it is not really part of South London, my South London, at all. It is not the Latin Quarter of Lewisham but the last stage on the road from Dover and Canterbury along which bearers of continental culture have traditionally galloped. Dulwich Village is as spick and span and unbelievable as it ever was; but its charm is rural, or at least that of a small cathedral city. It used to have an oddly colonial atmosphere, with the Master of the College instead of His Excellency the Governor as the social focus: his Lady arrived last at parties and left first. Walking about Clapham and Brixton and Sydenham you may not find much in the way of post-existentialist dives, but you do find coaching inns that are still discernible behind a screen of secondhand cars. It is exciting to come on a bit of Surrey township in a

waste of late-Victorian building. Even in the seedy desert between the Oval and Brixton, spiritual home of the departed tram, there are sprucely occupied Regency crescents. The inner suburbs are getting popular again: after all, if trains are filling up at Littlehampton why not stand for ten minutes in the morning instead of a couple of hours?

They keep telling us that the world

has changed *like anything*; but atomic power is out of sight, tucked away in bird sanctuaries, while the place I grew up in is really very much the same. I suspect that to-day its life still comes up over the hill from the open country rather than down from Bloomsbury and St. James's Square. The chief difference I notice is that the L.C.C. have got the names of several of the roads wrong. They have also made them steeper.

Either Would Be Nice

(*Loudspeakers failed at one of Mr. Macmillan's meetings, and lights at one of Mr. Gaitskell's*)

THIS is the time when rival party voices
Besiege the ear with old familiar choices,
And really, when you've heard and weighed and seen them,
There's not an awful lot to choose between them.

However, if this makes the contest dreary,
There is another choice, at least in theory:
Which to prefer—not public saint or villain—
But unseen Gaitskell . . . or unheard Macmillan?

— J. B. BOOTHROYD



"I think it's high time that dog was emptied."



OUR CANDIDATE APPEALS TO YOU

Mr. Arnold J. Willing, the *Punch* Candidate. Mr. Willing stood for the Bouvierie East Division in the General Elections of 1945, 1950, 1951 and 1955 as a radical constitutionalist, and at approximately twenty-three by-elections over the same period. TOTAL DEPOSITS IN EXCESS OF £3,000.

DEAR Voter,—On past form I take for granted that only an approximate 20 per cent of those receiving this Election Address will trouble themselves to read more than a couple of paragraphs. You may be one of that intelligent minority.

The other candidates will also, I assume, be sending you their Election Addresses. There is no good reason why you should do more than glance at such pieces of salesman's patter before rolling them into spills for pipe or cigarette. I happen to know that all were prepared by the same Public Relations Agency. One of them, I believe, makes heavy play with the fact that he is an ex-Minister of one Government or other, as though that were a recommendation rather than a confession. Another boasts that he has spent long years in the House of Commons. In that capacity he earned the esteem of his Party's Whips, but not of anyone else.

For myself, I will state at once that a vast area of vital political knowledge is, in the strictly practical sense, but dimly comprehended by me. In this I differ from my opponents only by the fact of stating it. In the field of foreign affairs, for instance, I know whom you mean when you say "Nikita Khrushchev" and "Mao Tse-tung," but I do not know just exactly what makes them tick nor, in consequence, just how to make friends with them and influence them. I know where the Middle East is, but I do not know for an absolute certainty whether we should do better to arrest the Sultan of Oily at gunpoint and deport him to the Seychelles or make him a present of ten million pounds. I cannot say whether

the consequences of doing either or neither would be the more disastrous.

Being thus ignorant I promise, if elected, to seek expert advice on all questions. I shall also advise myself about the experts. On Defence and kindred



The predilection of statesmen for the detective novel is not one shared by Mr. Willing, who indeed deplores it. He is seen here enjoying an hour's quiet rhetoric.



Mr. Willing, who saw distinguished service in the war by a number of fellow-officers, is intensely interested in British, European and world affairs.

matters, for example, I shall consult Experts A and B, bearing in mind that A was the man who stated that within a few hours of the outbreak of World War II every major city in the world would be obliterated by poison-gas attacks; and that B, in a top-secret report in 1952, said that the idea of man-made earth satellites was "a figment of the unscientific imagination."

On economic and financial matters I shall avail myself of the *expertise* of a list of sages running half-way through the alphabet. They will include the expert who (I shall not forget) won renown by proving that Hitler's unorthodox economic structure would collapse automatically in 1940, and that the Soviet Government would be sitting paralysed in an economic quagmire by about the end of 1957. I pledge myself not to say or do anything until I have heard from the man who persuaded us it would be good business to sell Trinidad to the Americans because it would at least make for goodwill and ensure kindly consideration for British firms tendering for large scale enterprises in the United States.

I shall then proceed largely by playing my hunches. My opponents will affect to sneer at hunches. This is merely an admission that they have no confidence in their own—a mistrust which in their case is fully justified. If I did not myself place reliance upon my intuitive gifts and those of the British electorate I should not have the audacity to offer myself as a Parliamentary candidate. However, I am prepared, if

elected, to refer to my own hunches as my "appreciation of the realities of the immediate situation" and to those of the electorate as "the basic common sense of the mass of the British people."

In the same way, when I come later to outline My Programme, I wish to be understood as meaning by that a short list of Things We Certainly Ought to Have a Shot at Trying to Do (and the heck with what the neighbours and the vested interests of all types and the willy-wetlegs, and the Men in Grey Flannel Suits and the ventriloquists' dolls and the ugly rabble of double-faced statisticians may have to say about it). And just in case some dictatorially-minded poop takes this as an indication that I am in favour of pushing people about unless they greet me and my programme as the salvation of the country, and has the impudence to claim me as an ally, let me tell him that I am a democrat. And by that I mean that if there really are more people belonging to the above categories than there are others in this country, then I am in favour of letting them get on with it.

In conclusion, I would emphasize that if you—as you possibly may—find a point in my opponents' programme which strikes you as good you should treat it with special caution. It may be an insincere trick of the political trade. Should they, nevertheless, be able to demonstrate to you that they are sincerely in favour of certain obviously good things, remember that I am in favour of all such objectives too—but more vigorously and sincerely than they are.

Should I, on the other hand, fail to castigate some evident evil with which one of my opponents is making play, bear in mind that such an omission is due solely to the pressure of crying evils to be dealt with. My attitude to obvious evils and abuses is similar to that of my opponents, but more steadfast, more uncompromising, more dedicated.

In voting for me you may be sure that you are voting for one who will press forward whenever he is not forced to retreat, while remaining ever ready with the swift side-step when events dictate its expediency.



To theorize without the full facts is, in Mr. Willing's opinion, at the root of much muddled political thinking. He believes in keeping himself fully abreast of events by frequent reference to infallible information sources.

Off-Beat Generation

From San Francisco B. A. YOUNG reports on the Beatnik situation

HERE we are, three respectable men of mature years, Doctor Baerleiter and his brother-in-law Tom and myself, and the doctor a doctor of *music*, dammit, not just a doctor; and as we walk placidly from the Pacific Ocean Park along the *déclassé* seafront of Venice, Calif., to where we have left our car, a totally strange woman calls out to us "You needn't go on; the beatnik place is closed."

It seems to be one of the characteristics of beatnik places, either to be closed or to be empty of beatniks. The Beat Generation, in fact, my principal quarry in California, is decidedly elusive. It is true that the beatnik place in Venice (the Gas-house, it is called) opened again later; it may have been closed for decoration, or let's say for undecoration, as nothing more artistic than a travel-poster or an advertisement for a poetry reading is likely to be found on its walls; but a high-school student in touch with things told me next day that the beatniks had left Venice. "Where have they gone?" I asked him. "Florence," he said.

There are pockets of the Beat Generation all up and down the coast of California south of San Francisco, but San Francisco itself is the headquarters of the movement. In San Francisco they have their bars, their bookshop, even their church. Perhaps church is too ambitious a description of it. However, a word in a rather long parenthesis about beat religion first.

The basic religion of the Beat Generation is a kind of debauched Zen

Buddhism into which they fit everything from hitch-hiking to sex-orgies, but they tend to include elements of other creeds by way of additional insurance. "I pray," says Jack (*On the Road*) Kerouac, the archdruid of the beatniks, "to my father, to my little brother who died, to Jesus and to Buddha"; so there is no reason why a Christian beatnik church should not be established, especially if it is as tolerant as the local Zen Buddhist fraternity, and in fact one has been established at the corner of Grant Avenue and Greenwich Street in the North Beach area by the Rev. Pierre Delattre, about whom I was told by the editor of the *Village Voice* in New York. Nominally it is Congregationalist, but it is flexible enough to admit, for instance, readings of beatnik poet and bookseller Lawrence Ferlinghetti's *Crucifixion*: "He was a kind of carpenter from a square-type place like Galilee . . . who said the cat who really laid it on us all was his Dad." The church was formerly a store and still looks like one. In the window is a crude painting of a man holding a huge carafe of red wine, while another man, separated from him by a table, appears to be praying for him, unless he is begging for some of the wine. Pastor Delattre's services consist of serving bread and wine to the beatniks. "If anyone says to me 'What are you doing here?'" he told a reporter, "I just say 'I'm here.'"

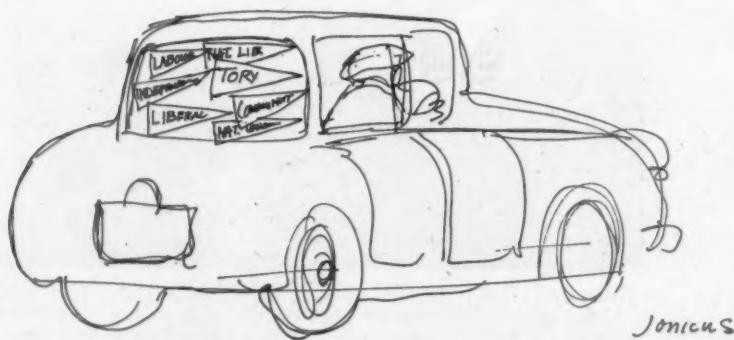
So I am here too, walking up Grant Avenue, which has a gradient of about one in four, nothing much for San Francisco; but when I get to the Mission

Pastor Delattre is not here at all, all there is a notice in the doorway saying that from now on the Mission is only open Saturday thru Tuesday from seven p.m., and to-day is Thursday.

However, Grant Avenue is the main drag of the beat world, so all I have to do is turn round and walk down one block to The Place, which, as Mr. Kerouac tells us in his new book, is the favourite bar of the hepcats around the Beach, and where, if you are lucky, you will find Mr. Kerouac himself and Mr. Ferlinghetti and Mr. Allen Ginsberg and Mr. Kenneth Rexroth (honorary beatnik), but if you are not lucky you will find a bunch of sad-looking people, mostly bearded and mostly silent and mostly under thirty. I am not lucky, except in so far as The Place serves what is said to be the biggest 25-cent beer in town, and I come away with a feeling that I saw all this in Chelsea, or rather in Fulham, years ago.

However, a couple of blocks farther down is the Co-existence Bagel Shop, another very "in" bar; and the interesting thing about this place is that two policemen have been standing on the pavement outside and watching it ever since I arrived in the area, so in I go, and the first thing I see, the barman refuses to serve two undoubted beatniks because he suspects them of being under twenty-one. Here is action at last. The barman, who knows at once from my double-breasted suit that I am English, draws me a dark beer because the light has run out (this is about ten o'clock in the evening) but cannot say what the police are doing. They cannot be doing anything desperate, because, in the endearing way of the San Francisco police, they are not wearing guns.

When I am half-way through my beer they come in and question a young negro and go out again and the young negro puts another nickel in the juke-box and plays Ella Fitzgerald. But it all turns out to be quite interesting, because the reason why the police are here is because a beat poet, who has taken a dislike to the local patrolman, has been writing scurrilous verses about him and pinning them up on the wall of the bar, and the





"It's another of those threatening letters."

police have said that if they are not taken down they will close the joint up.

Almost opposite the Bagel Shop is the Tea Room and Coffee Gallery, which used to be the refined Miss Smith's Tea Room but has now gone beat. It is owned by an ex-bartender from The Place, and although it is a good deal bigger the atmosphere is the same, there is the same smell of feet and stale beer, and the same clientele of silent bearded figures posing as intellectuals. One beer there, and on to The Cellar, in Green Street, where poet Ferlinghetti sometimes recites his poems to an improvised accompaniment by a small and bewildered jazz band. Mr. Ferlinghetti is not there this evening (as a matter of fact I see him later on in the City Lights Bookshop, recommending a customer to read Berdyaev), but there is a band, a very good quartet led by one Leroy Vinnegor: trumpet, piano, drums and bass, though whether this really justifies a fifty-cent door charge and sixty-five cents for a bottle of beer

I would not care to say. There are some six other customers, most of whom seem to be friends of the pianist, the only white member of the band.

So there I am, completely disillusioned with the Beat Generation, and I can only assume that they are all away somewhere for the night, perhaps meditating or riding freight-trains or doing some of those other things they find so exciting, for I can hardly believe that the seedy-looking bunch I have seen are the boys who have started a cultural movement all over America. They certainly do not look capable either of writing books or organizing such amusing ploys as the expedition they once made, as a protest against the excessive attentions of tourists who wanted to see how they lived, when they invaded all the smart hotels like the Mark Hopkins to see how the tourists lived. I end up in the Black Hawk Club, where Cal Tjader (who seems to be replacing George Shearing as the beatniks' number one band-leader) plays

modern jazz to poker-faced aficionados. On Saturday I collect Dr. Baerleiter and Tom, hoping that the week-end may bring some more entertaining characters into town, and go through the routine again. The poems are gone from the Bagel Shop, but the police are not. We fill in a few gaps: the Vesuvio, which advertises "Booths for Psychiatrists," and the Anxious Asp, where the "rest room" is papered with the pages of the Kinsey Report, and the Old Spaghetti Factory, which looks like a badly-furnished barn belonging to a bankrupt antique dealer. We leave the Mission until last, and when the time comes to move up there we feel that perhaps we should be lacking in respect to go in our present mood, so instead we spend half an hour driving down the curly part of Lombard Street, which has fourteen consecutive hairpin bends on the steepest slope you ever saw and can be taken at a steady twenty-five m.p.h. if you are mad enough. It seems more fun than the Beat Generation, somehow.

In the City



Caveat Vendor

IT is not only the buyer who has to keep his wary wits about him. The seller can also come a cropper—as recent events in the property company world have shown. Even a cash sale at an attractively high price looks a very different proposition when the cash is not forthcoming and the buyer abroad.

The affairs of the Jasper group of companies which have somewhat disturbed the Stock Exchange, cast their shadow over a building society and fluttered some political dovecots, provide a salutary example of the dangers of financial pyramiding. Mr. Jasper is a relative newcomer to the property world. He sensed the coming boom three years ago and through his so-called "merchant banking" firm he bid for and acquired a collection of property companies including such delectable names as Victory Real Estate, National Model Dwellings, Reliable Properties, and Temperance Billiards Halls.

The boom duly arrived in 1958, let loose by the combination of easy credit, decontrol of rents and the rebuilding programme. Some of the prices paid for the deals of the group may have seemed high at the time, but the finance could be readily found from certain building societies, a few foreign bank deposits and sizeable bank overdrafts. It was merely a problem of bridging the financial gap and waiting to be overtaken by the rise in property values and the growing speculative appetite for property shares.

The temporary success story of the group also depended on the familiar principle of accumulation. The bigger the new ventures and the preliminary financing required in launching them, the easier it was to finance the earlier, more modest acquisitions. There is, however, a limit to the process of growth, whether of the Jasper or any other group. In this case there seems to have been a tendency, understandable in the circumstances, but mortally dangerous, to overbid and overreach.

It became evident with the taking over of Lintang Investments, formerly a rubber, but now a property, company which owns Dolphin Square.

This acquisition strained the available resources and some sellers of Lintang shares still await their cash. The strain increased and rent the fabric of the group with the purchase of Ely Brewery for £1,700,000, of which not a penny has up to this moment been paid. The explanation by Mr. Jasper that his "merchant bank" was in these cases acting for a client, Mr. Grunwald (alias Greenwood), last heard of in Tel Aviv, is no explanation but confirmation of some of the worst fears entertained about the outcome of this affair.

The position became both clearer and more ominous with the disclosure that the State Building Society has lent nearly £4 million to the Jasper group, that there are arrears of payment on some of the mortgages, and that withdrawals by shareholders of the Society

are being restricted to 1s. in the £. This sorry tale calls for two cautionary warnings. The first is against generalizing and tarring all property companies with the brush that has blackened some of the newcomers. The older companies, including such "blue chips" of the property world as City of London Real Property, Capital and Counties and Land Securities, face an assured future—even assuming a mishap on October 8.

Secondly a word of advice uttered, not for the first time from Lombard Lane, about investing money with building societies. It is wise to keep to the members of the Building Societies Association such as the Abbey National, the Woolwich, and the Co-operative Permanent, plus, of course, the largest of them all, the Halifax, which for the time being is not a member. The extra return offered by certain other societies is not worth the attendant risk.

— LOMBARD LANE

* * *

I've never had the capital to indulge in any of these projects. I've been content to leave the barn empty.

At any rate, that's what I thought I'd done. Until last week when I went to a farm sale and found myself bidding out of boredom for a white deal table that was knocked down for a few shillings. When I got home I told one of the men to chuck the table into the barn. "Never know when it might come in useful," I said. The man looked dubious. "Doubt if I can squeeze another thing into the barn guvnor," he said. "Nonsense," I replied, remembering the acre of emptiness.

But that was before I'd collected things which "might come in useful one day." For the last week three men have been clearing them out. My cache contained: a brougham—which I remember buying when petrol was rationed; a hand cornmill acquired when flour was scarce; eight sofas bought for no reason I'll admit to; three dozen disinfectant bottles (I believe I intended to make table lamps); a lump of tallow, a chunk of pitch—both from the beach; hundreds of rusty tools bought cheap(?) at farm sales and enough furniture to refurbish Balmoral.

This mountain of clutter now stands in the yard. I'm revealed as a jackdaw. The only thing I can do is to hold a farm sale and buy a padlock for my barn against further temptation to acquire anything useful. — RONALD DUNCAN

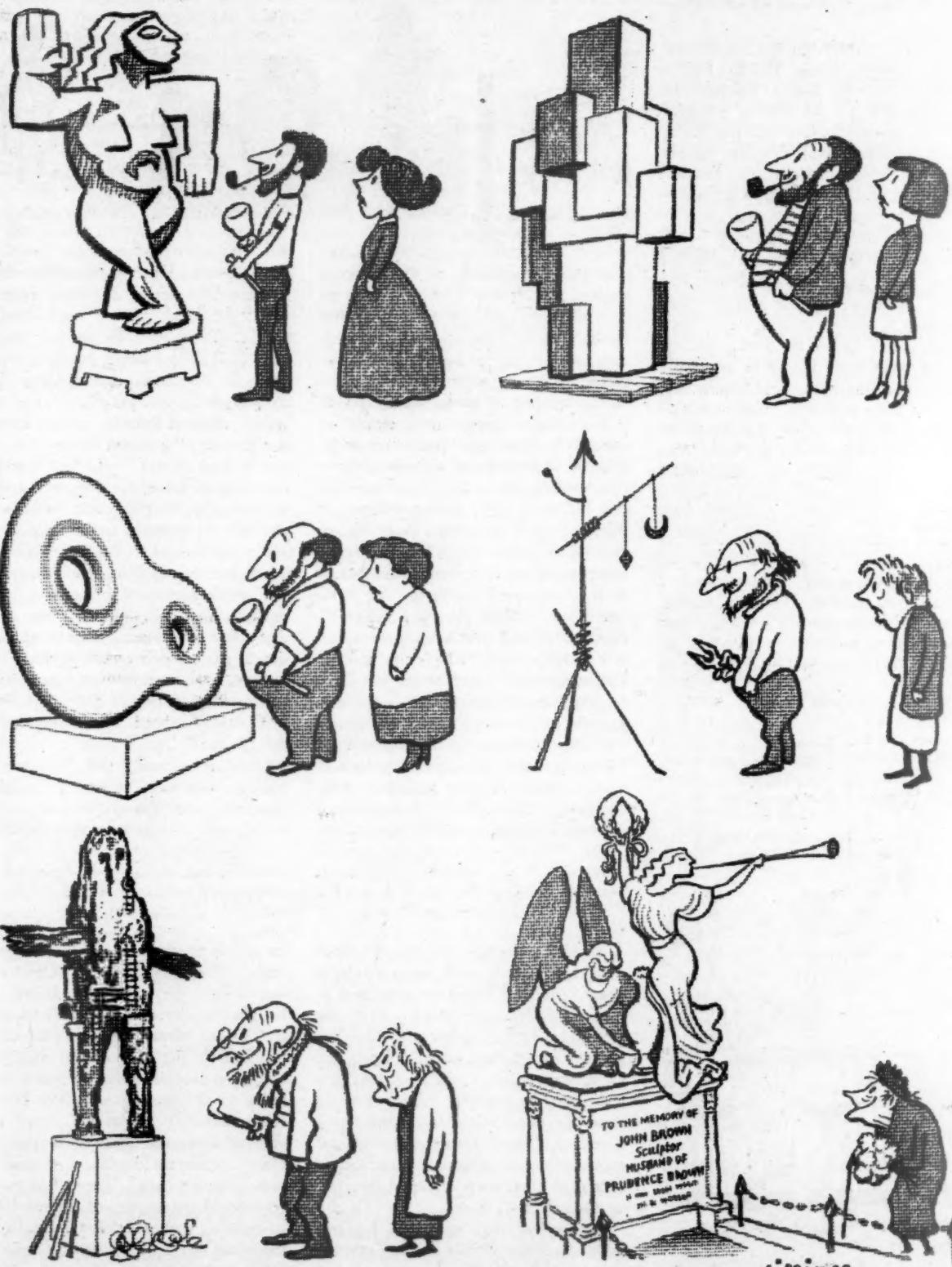


In the Country

Too Much With Us

I AM covered in shame and cobwebs. Of course the instinct to hoard is in us all; but whereas most people have only an attic or an odd cupboard under the stairs in which to collect their junk, I have had other opportunities, or temptations.

There's a tithe barn on my farm which was built a couple of centuries ago when labour was cheap, and slates and timber even cheaper. It's an enormous place designed to store the grain from about five hundred acres of barley. For the last thirty years, it has not held even a single bushel. When I started farming, the great barn was empty: I glanced round it and wondered to what use I could put it. Somebody suggested I should turn it into a theatre. I decided where to put the dressing-rooms before I realized that the nearest audience was fifty miles away. I've thought of adapting the barn as a battery hen unit, a mink farm and a cinema. I dare say I'm fortunate that



Well, Eleanora,

IN your heavenly upper circle you are a hundred years young, not a hundred years old, to-day. I should like to send you a cake with a hundred candles, a bouquet of a hundred roses. I cannot even send you an earthly greetings telegram. Perhaps, instead, you will accept this mundane but heartfelt tribute: a tribute not, this once, to your acting but to your modesty.

You were so refreshingly different from Sarah Bernhardt—I almost said Sarah Barnum—and a dozen other actresses I could mention. You were unique. You had no time for publicity.

You were quite happy to avoid the press "in a tiny, quite tiny little house, really a little box with green window-frames beside the great, illimitable sea . . . What silence!" you exulted. "No piano, no terrestrial music—not a newspaper . . ." You had a horror of papers and reporters. Do you remember how you once pinned up a doctor's certificate on your door: "Signora Duse cannot be disturbed in any circumstances"? And do you remember how, in London, when a certain woman journalist just could not be excluded, you dressed up your maid in your bed, and for half an

**FOR
WOMEN**



hour she pretended to be ill, and kept the intruder at bay? "From seven to eleven," you said, "I belong to the public. But for the rest of the time I have the right to keep my life to myself."

You refused to go to the Queen of Italy's box during the interval of *Cavalleria Rusticana*; you turned the King of Wurtemberg, in person, from your dressing-room door. At concerts you hid in a nook of the gallery; at theatres, as a spectator, you always avoided the stalls. You refused to attend large receptions, and abruptly left hotels if they ventured to treat you as a celebrity. When Sarah Bernhardt's manager offered you a European tour you simply said "I'm only a little Italian actress." And, when you were famous, you refused to call your company by your name. "Am I," you asked, "to advertise my name like the name of Liebig on the beef-extract posters?"

And your clothes reflected your character. When Worth himself, at a moment's notice, conjured up a dress

(grey, embroidered with rhinestones) for the third act of *Princesse Georges*, you "put it on without remembering that it was new." In St. Petersburg you "did not look like a famous personage; you did not, indeed, look like anything at all . . ."

And when at last you played a part you played it "as if you thought no one was looking at you." In fact you did not think of yourself. You, who hated to sign a photograph, would "always do your utmost to get on to the stage without being noticed." You were satisfied when you managed to slip on quietly, or at most provoke a murmur of "Oh, so that's her!" But the very first word that fell from your lips, the very first simple gesture or movement made you a somebody, "and that somebody soon became the centre, so that apart from you nobody existed on the stage or in the theatre."

Oh, dear! There I go! I'm afraid I couldn't help it. I've paid yet another tribute to your acting.

— JOANNA RICHARDSON

The Last Straw

WHILE my son was still at school his clothes took up very little space. Indeed I found the scantiness of his wardrobe, compared with the plenitude of mine, rather pathetic. For instance, apart from his school cap, the only headgear he possessed was the jockey cap he wore for riding. But his wardrobe came in useful during term-time as additional storage space for my evening dresses, although these had to return to their own cramped quarters in the holidays.

In his last year at school my son became a senior prefect and was entitled to wear a brown trilby, but this was less

an article of clothing than a badge of rank. Then, when he left school and was waiting to go up to Oxford, he bought a bowler, as befitted a Temporary City Gent. Wearing a dark blue suit of his father's (let out on the shoulders and taken in at the waist) he cycled three miles to the station with the bowler clamped firmly round his ears. His chest of drawers and wardrobe were now filling up; improvidently I had made no provision for hats. These had to be accommodated on top of his wardrobe where they gathered cobwebs and gave the room the appearance of a second-hand clothes shop.



"Once I was a 90-pound weakling."

At eighteen my son decided that a jockey cap was too juvenile and it was replaced—though not discarded—by a riding bowler. After the first intoxicating hiring of a grey top hat for a wedding, I was easily persuaded that as his head would expand no further it would be a true economy to buy one. This glorious acquisition has its own special box and the top of the wardrobe is becoming congested.

Meanwhile the wardrobe itself has changed its status. It is no longer a vast container, holding a few small, lonely possessions, but is now inadequate, crammed as it is with lounge suits, tweed suits, cavalry twills, riding breeches, beagling breeches, tail coat, dinner jacket and flannels. Some of my son's clothes depart with him to Oxford, but all the hats remain behind, because no one, until now, has worn a hat at Oxford.

On visiting my son last term I was startled by the vision of his face below a "boater." This, I was given to understand, is the latest manifestation of the return to formal clothes. I had grown used to the narrow trousers—so like and yet so unlike the Teddy-boy variety—the high, semi-stiff collar and the general and welcome air of immaculate, sartorial splendour. I am far from criticizing the reaction from long hair and grubby fingernails, floral shirts and dirty shoes. But, knowing that there is no further room among the medley of assorted headgear already jostling for space on top of his wardrobe, I ventured to ask where he intended to keep it when he came home.

He had already solved that problem. It was much too precious to be squeezed in among his other hats on his wardrobe. He thought it would be best to keep it, on a shelf by itself, in mine.

— BRENDA BROOKE



Lament

WE cooed and quoted, boring all our friends,
Egging on walkie-talkie infants till
We found we had defeated our own
ends . . .
If only they'd be quiet and sit still!

— MARGOT CROSSE

ALISON ADBURGHAM replies to PHYLLIS HEATHCOTE

A Letter to Paris

MY DEAR PHYLLIS,—What is French comment on Edward Rayne's bold capture of the famous Tour d'Argent for his presentation of *Le Look Anglais*? The English model girls were certainly well chosen for their part, so demi-demure in Cavanagh's perfect simplicities and Rayne's pluperfect shoes. But picking out the Anglo-Parisiennes among the guests it seemed to me the English Look is by no means indelible. Yourself, for instance, could be *corps diplomatique* or the second Madame Tabouis; Lady Jebb an ambassadress from Paradise.

French infiltration into London fashion goes on unceasingly. On the very day that *Le Look Anglais* was being exposed in Paris the French Ambassador opened an exhibition of Lyons silks at Liberty's. Then last Tuesday Boussac cottons had a big show, and Hermès opened a branch in Jermyn Street, calling it Faubourg St. Honoré, Ltd. Woollards already have models by Balenciaga and Givenchy, and there has been a party at the Savoy to introduce Christian Dior ties, cravats and dressing-gowns . . . male trappings designed by Yves St. Laurent and made in England by James Linton. You may have already seen them in the Dior Boutique, and they are going into select shops all over England. The ties are very subtle weaves and patterns, greens, browns, lichens, and brackens—Forest of Arden rather than old Burlington Arcadians. The dressing-gowns could have been sired by Maurice Chevalier.

The Savoy has also been a battlefield in the Great Soup War between tins and packets. Knorr Soups (packets) had a spring offensive with a lunch for which the head chef of the Savoy was asked to cook everything in soup. After a temperamental swoon he did. They followed this up in the summer with an evening water-party at what is known as Little Venice—less romantically the Grand Union Canal at Paddington Basin; the Knorr West Soup Basin now Campbell's Soups (tins) counter-attacked this month by inviting the Duke of Argyll, Donald Campbell, and various also-ran Campbells to a lunch to celebrate their new factory at

King's Lynn and their new schoolboy special, Bean and Bacon Soup. I wonder if *prêt-à-porter* soups are beginning to oust the family stock-pot in France? A European representative told me the farther south you go the less soup you sell, and he doesn't attribute this to climate but to fewer wives working outside the home.

Talking of climate, a Television Weather Girl gave the forecast for this winter at a parade of Morland's sheep-skin-lined boots: snow, frost, sleet and hail. It was just a euphemistic way of saying you'll want some good warm boots. And their warm boots are good . . . very light, flexible and shapely, not a bit hoofy. Nor expensive, except one prestige pair in ostrich skin with real gold trimmings priced at 100 guineas; a challenge to Barbara Hutton. Incidentally, you remember her ordering furs with such total prodigality at Lanvin-Castillo's? Well, Debenham & Freebody have an exclusive tie-up here for their complete fur collection. We, too, can have that four-husbands-and-a-fortune look.

As ever,

— ALISON



Toby Competitions

No. 81—Lunar Loyalty

SEVERAL new national anthems have been written recently. One will be needed, sooner or later, for The Moon. Competitors are invited to get in first. Limit: one stanza of not more than 8 lines and refrain, 6 lines.

A prize consisting of a framed *Punch* original, to be selected from all available drawings, is offered for the best entry. Runners-up will receive a book token to the value of one guinea. Entries by first post on Friday, October 9, to TOBY COMPETITION No. 81, *Punch*, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.

Report on Competition No. 78 (Needs Must)

This competition gave readers the opportunity to air their views on television as a conventional necessity. A number of entries approached the subject from the angle of those only educated to ITV appreciation standards while others

fell short by being concerned with the individual. The facetious predominated and although the "keeping up with the Joneses" is a hackneyed idea which was used frequently by competitors, the winner

JOHN RODDIE
26 RAMSAY PLACE,
JOHNSTONE,
RENFREWSHIRE

used it with a reasoned background.

I have heard many arguments put forward to refute the suggestion that television is not a necessity, including those of "the necessity for a new presentation of education" . . . "the necessity for a system of communication independent of printers and ink-manufacturers" . . . "the necessity for this particular form of advertising" . . . "the necessity for visual entertainment in the home" . . . and even "the necessity for employment for technicians and artists," none of which have changed my own opinion of its not being a necessity. The irrefutable argument against my suggestion came, however, from my young son, when



he complained with the relentless logic of childhood, "But everyone else has one." (So, now, have we . . .)

Book tokens to the following:

We can say with confidence that television subtracts a large sum from the National Health Service drug bill; the sedative effect of the average controversial discussion programme, for instance, is quite incalculable. Moreover, by means of television, many millions of minds achieve each evening a state of tranquillised vacuity attainable otherwise only by employment in a government department.

The social prestige of not possessing a television set (known sociologically as "keeping down with the Browns") is evidence of a deplorably retrograde tendency. However there is every hope that, given ten more years of uninterrupted viewing, the public mind may yet attain that degree of mental deficiency already presumed in the advertisements addressed to it.—*Martin Fagg, 22 Pinewood Road, Bromley, Kent*

Assuming tobacco a "conventional necessity"—for smokers—television is as necessary to its own addicts. Imagine the plight of one accustomed to living in semi-darkness, greeting his guests negligently without taking his eyes off the screen, and sitting in rows as if at school, suddenly plunged into light, made to face his companions and, if not blinded, to look them in the eye. Deprive a nation of television and one can confidently expect wholesale murder and a nasty rush of suicides at the best. At the worst the majority would act their lives out as if being televised. Therefore television is, to those with the nation's welfare at heart, a social necessity. But not in my house.—*Teresa Baldwinson, Swallowfield, Hammers Lane, Mill Hill, London, N.W.7*

No telly? Cor, that'd be stinkin'!

You can't do the Pools all the week.
It gives me the shudders just thinkin'
About a hexistence so bleak.

No, really, now, fancy provokin'

The jumps in a bloke wot ain't strong.
I know as you must 'a bin jokin',
But jokes of that sort—well, they're wrong.
You can't even drown all your sorrow
Around at the local, in drink:

You'd 'ave a 'angover tomorrow

An' then start—Gawd 'elp us—to think!
So leave me my 14in. telly

For while I can view every day,
Though empty my old Derby Kelly,

Upon the right path I will stay.

D. R. Pddy, 300 Baring Road, London, S.E.12

Not to have television is no longer merely "quaint" (as the woman said in the *Punch* cartoon) it is anti-social. It narrows the outlook intolerably. What conversation can be long sustained with someone unfamiliar with "Wagon Train"? And what a problem would our ever-increasing leisure-hours prove without television to fill each one with sixty long minutes of unrelenting entertainment! The torpor this induces is the only adequate sedative for the stress of modern life; for looking-in demands no discrimination, does not tax the imagination and is the perfect antidote to thought. If more were needed to prove television a necessity, witness the fact that no one who has once had it can thereafter exist without it.—*M. Tomkins, Little Rose Cottage, Sleep's Hyde, St. Albans, Herts.*

A series defining moments of crisis and redirection in private lives

turning point



Bread-Pudding

BREAD-PUDDING. That was my turning point.

But for Mrs. Parcel and her bread-pudding I would, this very minute, be checking the onion ledger at Larkin's Pickle Factory instead of sitting up here in the Clooney Mountains, a five-star, big-shot, Quartermaster-General of the Sons of Liberty.

It was all right as a clerk down at Larkin's in the 'thirties; three pounds a week and all the pickles your stomach could master. And I had it fat and easy lodging with Mrs. Parcel who, by neighbourly acclaim and the dying words of Mr. Parcel, made the finest bread-pudding in the world.

Twice a week she would produce it for my supper, gleaming nut-brown, jewelled with currants and solid as sjambok.

"There you are, ducks," she'd say proudly. "Wrap yourself round that."

Unfortunately, I do not like bread-pudding. But I didn't have the courage to tell her so. To avoid hurting her feelings I used to cut the warm slab in two pieces, put one in each of my trouser pockets and smuggle them up to my bedroom.



She went through my room daily like a surgeon and so I locked the bread-pudding in a small Gladstone bag my father left me. He was employed by the Home Office and had used it to carry his rope.

After three months the bag was bung-full and when I snapped it shut on the last piece the softer element extruded through the lock. The time had clearly come to dispose of my hoard and I decided to throw it in the river. I took a tram to Blackfriars, walked twenty yards across the bridge and slung my load over the side. There must have been about twenty-eight pounds of bread-pudding in that bag and it hit the water like a depth-charge.

I hadn't gone three paces when whistles started shrilling . . . a ship turned on a searchlight . . . policemen came running from all directions . . . I took off like Antigonus and would have got clean away if I hadn't cornered myself in Printing House Square. They had me in a Black Maria and down at the station before I could draw breath.

A hungry inspector by Kafka eyed me while a constable like Carnera swore my life away.

" . . . and when he got to a point on the bridge just above the frigate, he drops over the side a cylindrical object which I took to be a bomb. It landed in the water a foot from the vessel . . . "

It became apparent that I had picked an unfavourable moment to drown my bread-pudding. The I.R.A. were then engaged in bombing pillar-boxes and such all over London. Three days before they'd had a go at Hammersmith Bridge and had blown a great lump out

of the parapet. In consequence, all Thames bridges had special police guards on them, and odd naval craft had been called in to watch the water below.

"What's your name?" asked Kafka.

I was a goner, of course, the moment I told him.

"You work for the I.R.A., I suppose?"

"No. I work for Larkin's Pickle Factory."

"And what did you throw over the side? Pickles?"

"No. Bread-pudding."

They exchanged cynical smiles. A taxi-driver sitting on a bench winked at me.

"The usual stuff, constable," said Kafka. "They give nothing away. Take him off and let Special Branch know."

I was sitting in a cell wondering how Larkin's would sort out the onion-state without me when there was a tap at the barred window and the taxi-driver looked in.

"Pssst! . . . Rest easy, Paddy-boy. We'll not stand by and see a comrade suffer . . . "

Half an hour later Carnera and a Special Branch man were taking me across the pavement to a car when half the male population of Ireland appeared, and set about them with all manner of grotesque shillelagh. I was picked up bodily and thrust into a taxi.

"Let me go! I'm in enough trouble with the police already . . . "

"Be still, man. We're after rescuing you. If you don't give over struggling I'll have to top you for your own safety . . . "

I went on struggling and he topped me with a sock full of gravel.

By Patrick Ryan

When I awoke I was lying on a stretcher in a paint-store.

"Where am I?"

"Safe and sound at local branch headquarters. I'm sorry I had to lam you. Here, drink this . . ."

A boiled-looking man poured a quarter-pint of whisky down my throat. Force feeding after my own heart. A squat gorilla in a green beret flung up a salute.

"Captain O'Shaughnessy. Honoured to be at the service of a special agent."

"I'm not a special agent."

"But nobody on the London strength was detailed to lob a bomb at that frigate."

"I didn't lob any bomb."

"Then what was it?"

"A Gladstone bag full of bread-pudding."

O'Shaughnessy chuckled admiringly.

"I get it, Seumas. Security. Dead nuts on security, these boys from G.H.Q. . . . 'Trust nobody,' that's their motto." He saluted again. "All right. O'Shaughnessy can take a hint. Not another question from me."

Seumas gave me another big gill.

"We'll not be able to keep you here long," he said. "Your description's already out on the radio. They guess you're an important agent because we took the trouble to rescue you and the dear only knows what they'll not charge you with if they catch you . . . bombing bridges, attacking the Navy, beating up coppers, the lot . . ."

He poured me a big one for the long dark road. Then they put on white coats and rubber gloves, picked up the stretcher and carried me outside to an ambulance. Lately topped and half-filled with whisky, I couldn't remonstrate effectively as they shoved me inside. I did notice, however, the big

red sign "SMALLPOX" on the ambulance door. . . . It was damp darkness when I awoke and they were lifting me into a barge full of cattle.

"You're safe away now," said Seumas.

"Let me off here. I've got to be at Larkin's Pickle Factory by half-past eight in the morning . . ."

"That's security for you," said O'Shaughnessy. "Never lets up, does he? Red-hot irons on his backside if they like and never a word would they get from him but pickles and bread-pudding."

The sea-air and the whisky liquefied my knees and I fell down in the scuppers, drunk as Dooley.

"Poor fellow," a voice said as we moved across the water. "He's all in."

"And no wonder. Blew the bows off a frigate single-handed they tell me, and blasted hell out of London Bridge . . ."

To add to the general gaiety I became sea-sick and, for the rest of the voyage, was anxious to be drowned.

We sighted Ireland next morning and a boat pulled alongside. They pushed me down a rope-ladder into it and I tried to climb back.

"This is all a mistake! I've got to get back to England . . ."

"Hark to him, McGrory," said the skipper as he beat me back down with his cap. "A regular fanatic, this one. The entire Metropolitan Police Force and half the Royal Navy after his blood and all he wants is to go back and blow up some pickle factory."

McGrory, a bear in black oil-skins, hugged me to him and came near to smothering me in his beard.

"We'll protect him from his zeal, captain, the hero that he is."

On land, he put me in a bull-nosed little car and we drove for an hour away up into the mountains, finally leaving

the road and bumping along a donkey-track. Every few hundred yards young men in green hats levelled guns yearningly at us while passwords were exchanged.

"Sons of Liberty," said McGrory. "The wildest of the lot. Touchy about the secret route to their headquarters. Very hasty on the trigger and eager to shoot anyone vaguely resembling an informer . . ."

We came to a ruined farm and they took me inside to see the General. He had a green jacket with stars all over it; his desk and tables around were piled with books and papers.

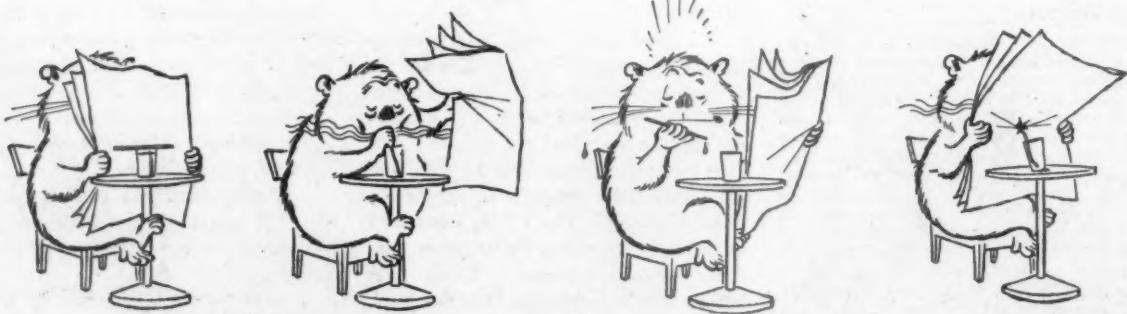
"He's here, General Maloney," proclaimed McGrory. "The boy that paralysed the Pool of London, sunk a destroyer across the Thames, blew up one leaf of Tower Bridge, half-killed four policemen with his bare hands——"

"Look, General," I broke in. "There seems to be something badly wrong . . ."

"Of course there is!" He smote the desk. "There's always something going badly wrong. And all because I've got no blasted administration here! . . . Don't tell me . . . I should have known all about you . . . And the signal from G.H.Q. telling me will be among that lot there." He gestured at the pile of papers. "Three weeks' mail! God only knows how many months' returns! Every man we recruit jumping mad to fire a gun or lob a bomb, but not one among them willing to put pen to paper. I ask any of them to be my clerk and they all claim they can neither read nor write."

A sheet fluttered from the desk. It was a requisition for dynamite, not unlike the Larkin's demand-form for piccalilli.

"This is four months old," I said. "And never been entered in the stock



GIOVANNETTI

records. How do you know how much dynamite you've got in stock?"

"Nobody knows. The only time we know how much we've got in stock of anything is when it runs out . . . I tell you, there's no damned administration here at all. If you want to find out what G.H.Q. said about you, then you're welcome to have a look for yourself."

They left me alone and I appreciated my situation. If I told the Sons of Liberty who I was, they'd shoot me. The same end was probable if I tried to slope off. If I got back to England the Police and the Navy would compete to incarcerate me. The best policy seemed to be to rest on my hero's reputation and lie low for a while.

Also, the mass of papers in the office called to my clerky instincts. I looked around at the dusty chaos and saw how orderly it all could be . . . files here, records there, in-trays, out-trays, stock ledgers, card indexes . . . everything balanced, cross-referenced and up to date . . . It would be so easy to make the place as snug and efficient as my own little onion office. . . . I sat down at the desk and turned over a bundle of papers . . .

. . . Within a week, I had the whole office in apple-pie order.

"Glory be!" said General Maloney. "But you're an administrative genius. You've done enough in the front line for any man and it would be a sinful waste to send you back to lobbing bombs. I'm appointing you my staff-sergeant right away."

A couple of months later I went on a tour of all Maloney's sub-units, bringing their office arrangements into line. G.H.Q. heard about me and I spent best part of a year there putting the place in shape. They made me a lieutenant and sent me to every Sons of Liberty formation in the country in turn. Three years it took me to get the whole thing ticking on manual lines and then I sold them the old myth that we could save man-power if we mechanized. I was a captain by then and firmly established in my rut. I went up the tree like a monkey . . . D.A.Q.M.G. . . . A.Q.M.G. . . . Q.M.G. . . . and now I've got the lot of them so damned busy filling in forms, submitting returns, punching cards, explaining discrepancies that they haven't had time to lob a bomb at anybody for years.



SEMIR

I'm just setting up an O. and M. Branch and God knows you can't have a better band-wagon and empire-fertilizer than that. So any year now I'm likely to be promoted to Field-Marshal and Big Daddy of all the Sons of Liberty . . . and if it hadn't been for Mrs. Parcel and her bread-pudding I'd still be checking that onion ledger down at Larkin's Pickle Factory.

Further contributors to this series will be:

MALCOLM BRADBURY
SIRIOL HUGH-JONES
J. MACLAREN-ROSS
J. P. MALLALIEU
PHILIP OAKES
KENNETH J. ROBINSON
JOHN WAIN



BOOKING OFFICE

South Pole

Antarctica. Frank Debenham. *Jenkins*, 25/-
Endurance. Alfred Lansing. *Hodder and Stoughton*, 21/-

THE huge white waste that covers the South Pole, as large as Europe and Australia combined, still suggests by muffled ridge and depression the positions of those hidden river valleys, the children of geologic yesterdays, whose exact location is now being brought to knowledge by the miracle of echo-sounding. Professor Debenham, himself a foremost member among the technicians who have teamed up with pioneer sailors to explore Antarctica, is here writing, not only about the emerging geography of the continent and the

struggles of the early explorers who made the new maps possible, but equally about the charming antics of Adélie penguins, the psychology of a dog team, the feeding habits of the blue whale, the correct method of crossing a crevasse or the difficulty of landing a helicopter on an unsullied surface. Among the leaders Scott is easily his favourite hero but he has unstinted admiration for Captain Cook, son of a Yorkshire farm labourer, for Wilkes, Byrd, Ross, Amundsen and a host of others.

Through all that cheerful minimizing of difficulties which his own part in enduring them may well justify, there can be heard the background shriek of the unceasing hostile wind blowing from the ice-cap to the sea. That wind for

him, more even than hunger and darkness and cold, more even than the dreaded scurvy, has always been and remains the principal obstacle to human advance. As the higher latitudes are reached so it becomes more devastating—roaring in the forties, howling in the fifties, screaming in the sixties, merciless, mechanical, abominable.

If in his final summary the writer has little to say of promise for the future value of the continent to mankind, regarding it mainly as a glorified sanatorium-plus-refrigerator with some interest for the meteorologist but with little hope of available mineral wealth, his infectious enthusiasm is in no way diminished. Antarctica itself remains.

For him the loss in 1915 of Shackleton's ship, *Endurance*, is just one of a series of mishaps such as are bound to await those who launch out into ice deserts so vast and terrible as the Weddell Sea; but to Mr. Lansing it is one of the greatest epic adventures ever recorded. He has studied all the diaries and cross-examined all the survivors so effectively that in his narrative the characters of each of the crew comes arrestingly to life. They were indeed a strangely mixed group, for Shackleton chose them often at a three-minutes interview and sometimes for no more pertinent recommendation than a lively twinkle in the eye or a recent journey in tropical Africa. One of them indeed was a stowaway; but they settled down under Shackleton's leadership to a team that could endure to the utmost limit.

Mr. Lansing begins with a heart-breaking description of the destruction of the ship, a vessel built immensely strong but unhappily not like Nansen's *Fram* shaped with a rounded hull to lift above the ice when under pressure. She was "nipped" as the old-time Arctic whalers were nipped, her heavy timbers crushed and splintered. Some of the most memorable photographs ever taken here show her in process of disruption. From that point to the happy ending ten months later, with no lives lost and a minimum of frost-bite damage, the story mounts from height to height of excitement on the shifting and breaking ice floes, in an open boat

THESE LOOKS SPEAK VOLUMES

A Panorama of Publishers

OF Canadian United Empire Loyalist extraction (his own phrase: no connection with the L.E.L.), Australian birth and Empire upbringing. At twenty-six, editor of the *Fortnightly Review* and *Review of Reviews*. At thirty, managing director of his own publishing firm, in connection with which he ran *Lovat Dickson's Magazine* to encourage the writing of short stories of high quality. For the past twenty-one years, has been associated with Macmillan and Co.

Has written two biographies (Grey Owl and Richard Hillary), a novel (*Out of the Waste Land*) and half an autobiography—the first volume of *The Ante-Room* is due out next month. The second volume is due out next year.

Asked what books he remembers with most pride having published, said "The early ones, not all lost in the mists of time, which seemed to the young publisher issuing them to be earth-shaking events, and in retrospect a quarter of a century later are still regarded with affection."

SIR DAVID LOW

2. LOVAT DICKSON

among the monstrous seas beyond Cape Horn and finally in the first crossing of the glacier-hung mountains of South Georgia by the leader and two companions in a desperate dash for help.

It was left to Sir Vivian Fuchs to achieve that transcontinental trek at which Shackleton had aimed. In the meantime the great revolution in arctic travel described by Professor Debenham had come about. The age of snow-tractors, aeroplanes and radio communication had come. Sir Vivian was met at the Pole itself by a party of journalists flown in to greet him. There were hot baths and organized transport; but still the wind raved on.

— C. CONWAY PLUMBE

NEW NOVELS

Exodus. Leon Uris. *Allan Wingate*, 21/-
The Fat Valley. J. B. Pick. *Bernard Hamison*, 15/-

The Tower. Marguerite Steen. *Collins*, 15/-

THE fictional approach to recent history must always be suspect; fact is likely to be coloured by art. When a confessedly partisan book is written as emotionally as Leon Uris has written *Exodus* the dangers are even more apparent. Mr. Uris states that *most* (my italics) of the events in his huge novel about the birth-pangs of modern Israel are a matter of history. Which are not, one is entitled to ask? Did the British C-in-C Palestine, for instance, really try, in 1947, to get rid of all the Jewish leaders by aiming trucks of dynamite at their headquarters? This is only one of similar questions that will frequently occur to the inquiring reader. One doesn't doubt the integrity of Mr. Uris, but only his ability to be objective, feeling as violently as he does. He tries hard, until partition, to be fair to British statesmen and the achievements of British rule; after partition nothing is bad enough for Whitehall.

This is an enormous novel, jerky and carelessly written. Its narrative style is melodramatic and diluted by torrents of exclamation marks; much of its dialogue, especially that between British officers, gives the impression of having been clumsily translated. Its sub-plot, the love-story of a tiresome American woman, is conventional. And yet, in spite of all these irritations, it is worth reading as a compendium of the Jewish suffering for which nearly everyone has cause to feel ashamed.

Mr. Uris begins with refugee children in post-war camps trying to force their way through the British cordon to Palestine; he takes us in flashbacks to Auschwitz and the Warsaw ghetto, and on to the small, desperate pioneer units which held the Arabs at bay and finally trounced them. He spares us nothing in this total, ghastly picture of Jewish martyrdom; it is hard to resist his

burning sincerity. What is really valuable in the book is that it gives us some idea of the extraordinary spirit of ecstatic dedication that, against all odds, produced Israel.

The Fat Valley, by J. B. Pick, could scarcely be in greater contrast; short, and quietly and beautifully written. With the greatest ease it performs the difficult trick of making us feel part of seventeenth-century Germany, as if we, like its hero Vogel, were caught in the hopeless stagnation of the Thirty Years War. Wandering half-starved across a shattered Europe he chances on a village in a little pocket of plenty at the moment when it is also discovered by a band of exhausted soldiers under a metaphysical captain. Vogel and he come to terms with the peasants and with one another and settle down to wait, two philosophers in a rickety society, for war to catch them up again. The end is very touching. Mr. Pick has delicacy and irony and the eye of a poet. He can conjure a scene or a mood with great economy.

After his detachment it's a shock to find a writer using the novel, as Marguerite Steen does *The Tower*, for a long series of bitter bleats against the Welfare State. Her book is about a boozy young painter of genius, whose marriage is made unhappy by a defective child, and even unhappier when his wife kills it. The Tower, symbol of an artist's freedom, is an old one in the south of France in which he is painting murals for a bogus French producer. Miss Steen writes readably in a chatty style ("Paul was slim and Varsity..."). She introduces us, with a mastery of jargon, to the people who operate in international art; but I felt her hero wouldn't have talked about the "toilet" or being "obligated."

— ERIC KEOWN

OTHER NEW BOOKS

Model Soldiers: A Collector's Guide, John G. Garratt. *Seeley Service*, 42/-

The collecting of toy soldiers, fascinating from both aesthetic and psychological aspects, has a story almost as old as history. One of Mr. John G. Garratt's illustrations shows Egyptian toy soldiers of the Eleventh Dynasty which might have been made yesterday. However, the Renaissance marks the emergence of the modern toy soldier, who took the shape in which we now know him in the latter part of the eighteenth century. Germany and France are in general ahead for liveliness and beauty of design, but the English firm of William Britain Ltd., dating from 1893, have some claim to be considered producers of as good a general example as exists. Their models are really toys, they cover (or covered) the armies of the world with extraordinary thoroughness, and, if not of great individual beauty, they are correct, realistic and essentially military in feeling. There are some French Engineers (c. 1870) illustrated in this volume which have almost a touch of early Impressionist



"But for a really cogent exposition . . ."

painting in their freedom of movement. At one end of the scale the toy soldier tails off in the small model figure of celebrities, or types, so that we find here unexpected characters such as Julian the Apostate, Montezuma, Ibrahim Pasha and Kleist; as well as subsidiaries like "a Greek hetaira." Can it be that the "Napoleonic toy soldier" in the Dorking Museum (pl. 70) is really a member of the Spanish Riding School in Vienna? The Brigade of Guards, by the way, wear a bearskin, not a busby. Mr. Garratt has provided an interesting and well documented book.

— A. P.

The Life of Girolamo Savonarola.

Roberto Ridolfi. Translated from the Italian by Cecil Grayson. *Routledge and Kegan Paul*, 35/-

Short, rufous, with grey-green eyes and a profile like a hatchet, Savonarola ruled through his tongue. A frail ascetic, who slept on straw, in the pulpit he was a tiger. "When I am up there," he said, "I am always well." His rabid, brilliantly constructional sermons appealed as a new sensation to the Florentines, jaded with a more elaborate eloquence: until the mob proved fickle he was the master of the city. He spiced these attacks with prophecies which often came true, and his sermons became best sellers, so that the printers were enriched. Pico de la Mirandola's "hair stood on end" when the Friar denounced Sin.

During his ascendancy, made possible by the French invasion of Italy and the expulsion of the Medici, he put down much "exquisite corruption" in Florence and even tried to reform the Papacy of Rodrigo Borgia. That astute Pope regarded him with lazy indifference until he became dangerous. Then, with his usual political finesse, he struck. Left

high and dry by French failure, excommunicate, betrayed, the prophet who burnt art treasures himself perished in the flames. Savonarola, who had hypnotic personal charm, died with saintly resolution. Those who admire fanatic enthusiasts will enjoy this book.

— J. E. B.

Early India and Pakistan. Sir Mortimer Wheeler. *Thames and Hudson, 25/-*

If many of the general readers for whom, as well as for students, the publishers designed this book find themselves happily following Sir Mortimer Wheeler as he passes lightly on his way from the latter half of the third millennium B.C., say, to a mere hundred years A.D. there will be others who are not so fortunate. For anyone, however, who has the energy and keenness of application required the book will prove greatly rewarding. The author's vivid description of pebble tools of unimaginable antiquity, of baked brick revetments for the defence of Kaushambi, one of the great sites of India, and so forth, are supplemented by a number of black-and-white illustrations and many beautiful plates in half-tone. He devotes many pages to that other universal relic of prehistoric man, his tombs. Strange it is that we to-day, so far away from India and Pakistan, have a link with some of

the oldest finds in tools discovered among the Clactonian of Essex.

— B. E. S.

Voyaging Under Sail. Eric C. Hiscock. *Oxford, 35/-*

Now that every port round our coast has a summer hatch of sails as thick as mayflies, it is not surprising that reporters have ceased to scurry when a small yacht comes in from Australia or America. Those considering such a passage could have no better counsellor than Mr. Hiscock, who has just set off with his wife to sail round the world for the second time in his little eight-ton sloop, *Wanderer III*. Here he does for long-distance voyagers what he did for yachtsmen in home waters in *Cruising Under Sail*, and just as usefully.

He writes very clearly and modestly, giving his seasoned advice on everything a man should know who is about to put his trust in a sailing yacht on the high seas. Liberally illustrated with his own excellent photographs, this beautifully produced book will delight all yachtsmen and be the first choice for the ocean-going library.

— E. O. D. K.

Robert Boyle: Father of Chemistry. Roger Pilkington. *John Murray, 18/-*

This addition to the *Men and Discoveries Library* treats Boyle as an

historical character in the round rather than as a mere peg for a dissertation on the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century. Unfortunately this means there is more about the aristocrat and amateur theologian than about the experimenter and popularizer. The summary of the change from alchemy to chemistry is lucid and Dr. Pilkington explains the relation between Boyle's air-pumps and the conclusions he drew from experiments with them succinctly and well. Boyle is treated rather in isolation from his scientific contemporaries; the layman, for whom the book is written, would have benefited from a short account of the continental background. Dr. Pilkington's interest in Boyle as a religious mind in the laboratory is not infectious because he does not show him as an interesting religious mind. It is all a little like the publicity of those film stars who want to be accepted as other-worldly.

— R. G. G. P.

CREDIT BALANCE

Samuel Rogers and William Gilpin. C. P. Barbier. *O.U.P., 16/-*. Account of friendship between founder of "picturesque" school of travellers and young banker-poet, with entertaining correspondence between them, some of it recently discovered. Side-lights on history of English sensibility; descriptions of Nature wild and buildings old and even Napoleonic Paris.

AT THE PLAY

Pieces of Eight (APOLLO)

KENNETH WILLIAMS, a mocking cherub, comes down on a wire at the beginning of *Pieces of Eight*, and all through a fairly happy evening we never lose sight of him for long. He has most of the best numbers, and excels himself in his own peculiar kind of comedy. The last customer at a coffee-stall—an old man, the mouth sunk, the eyes twitching, the rubber choirboy's face weathered out of shape—telling the moribund stallkeeper in a long lunatic conversation exactly how he sold his last evening paper is a wonderful satire on scraps overheard very late at night (this is by Harold Pinter).

He is just as funny as a mad little bore in a bowler hat, sitting in a railway carriage clutching a cardboard box, and assuring his *Times*-reading neighbour that he hasn't an asp but a viper; as he is with Fenella Fielding in a very surrealist sketch in which, examining his past for reasons of failure, he puts it down rather

EXHIBITIONS

"*Punch with Wings*." Pan-American Airways, Piccadilly.

"*Punch* in the Theatre." Citizens Theatre, Glasgow.

"*Punch* in the Cinema." Odeon, Plymouth.



FENELLA FIELDING and KENNETH WILLIAMS

(*Pieces of Eight*)

vaguely to milk, and to not having the names he finds he has. And these two finish the second half, which is an improvement on the first, by meeting as opposed spies in a hotel bedroom and fighting a duel with their respective poisons for the sheer love of the game. Mr. Williams, as he showed in *Share My Lettuce*, is an invaluable recruit to revue. There is satire in every square millimetre of his fourth-form face and a lethal mastery of accent in his chilling voice. On her own Miss Fielding scores most resoundingly, in a number by Sandy Wilson, as a reluctant call-girl

REP SELECTION

Playhouse, Liverpool, *Deep Are the Roots*, until October 17th.
 Nottingham Playhouse, *Take the Fool Away*, new Priestley, until October 10th.
 Ipswich, *Distant Point*, until October 10th.
 Perth, *Gigi*, until October 3rd.

mourning her open-air life on the beat. Her brand of absurdity matches that of Mr. Williams' very well.

The impression left by this revue, which is directed by Paddy Stone and charmingly decorated by Tony Walton, is of a fair score of winners, with now and then an outright hit, and of a good many numbers, often built round a good idea, that tail away without making an effective point. Nearly all of it is by Peter Cook, and on the evidence of his best we shall certainly hear of him again. The small and talented team (an eight-some) is strong in dancers; the little ballet to and from a champagne bar is one of the nicest things in the evening.

Recommended

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)
The Shifting Heart (Duke of Yorks—23/9/59), rugged Australian stuff. *Five Finger Exercise* (Comedy—23/7/58), good straight play with new cast. *The Crooked Mile* (Cambridge—16/9/59), new musical of some originality. — ERIC KEOWN

AT THE PICTURES

The Rabbit Trap
The Blue Angel

ONLY when something like *The Rabbit Trap* (Director: Philip Leacock) comes along does one realize how rare in films is a story genuinely based on character, and not on more or less violent and entertaining events arranged in an artificial pattern. In the ordinary way, what one gets in a film is a sequence of things that happen, that might happen to almost anybody; by the scriptwriter's contrivance they happen in such-and-such an order to people decorated with certain odd or striking characteristics, but the connection between events and people is quite arbitrary except in a limited, short-term sense



[*The Blue Angel*]

Lola—MAY BRITT

("This is how this sort of person reacts to this stimulus"). The people in *The Rabbit Trap* are not picturesque or unusual, the film does not examine them deeply or state any great truth; simply, it's extraordinarily refreshing to find character used as it should be used, to feel that this story is about *these* people and could not be about anyone else.

Refreshing to me, I should add. For what is the film's reward for being so good in this way? To be shown as half of a double-feature programme at the Marble Arch Odeon, to be ignored altogether by several of the newspaper critics and to get a snooty this-is-all-it's-about paragraph from most of the others.

Certainly it's not "about" very much, in the way of action; but as I have pointed out many times before—so far from being the most important factor in enjoyment, "what happens" is nearly always the least. The point in this instance is, I repeat, *character*, perceptively and sympathetically shown.

The central figure is Eddie (Ernest Borgnine), and the whole story arises out of his being the sort of man he is: kind, loving, likeable, but basically weak. On the first day of his holiday, just after he and his little son have set a trap to catch a rabbit alive, his brusque, inconsiderate boss calls him back to the office. He has every excuse not to obey: he is a valued employee and this is his first holiday for years. His gentle, understanding wife tries to stiffen his resolution . . . but he daren't. Back they go.

What precipitates trouble after this is first that the boy, worried about the possibility of a rabbit's dying in the

trap, goes back to the country alone to find it, and second that the brusque boss, impatiently brushing off Eddie's hesitant and apologetic attempts to explain why he needs to continue his holiday, assumes that the boy just wants a rabbit, and makes the mistake of giving Eddie one with his name on the collar. This at last makes him see the rabbit trap as a symbol of his own situation, and rouses him to talk back, lose his job, and not worry about it.

The whole thing is well written (by J. P. Miller), unobtrusively well directed, and full of good playing and entertaining detail. I found it a most attractive little picture, and I believe anybody who is observant and interested in people would enjoy it.

A great majority, I suppose, of to-day's moviegoers will be untroubled by having to make a conscious effort not to be distracted, as they watch *The Blue Angel* (Director: Edward Dmytryk), by the irrelevant memory of the original version in 1929. Nearly all the critics have concentrated on this angle, but I do maintain it's irrelevant. The merits of von Sternberg's film, apart from the bombshell of Dietrich and the power of Jannings, were cinematically of its time, and it's pointless to try to allow for the technical changes of thirty years (many of which, anyway, have come about under the earlier film's direct or indirect influence) and then consider whether the new version "does the same things as well." They can't conceivably be "the same things," that's the point.

That being said—well, the moral tale

"So far, so good . . ."



comes over strikingly enough, superficial though it is. Curt Jurgens gives quite a strong performance as the middle-aged bachelor professor, apparently ossified by routine, who falls for the promiscuous night-club singer, goes downhill and winds up as a grotesque stooge in her troupe. May Britt, decoratively feline, seems hardly vulgar or cruel enough. It's all very well done, and the German exterior scenes (CinemaScope De Luxe colour photography: Leon Shamroy) are often most beautiful.

Survey

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

Jet Storm is an all-in-the-same-boat, or -plane, piece: scientist's threat to blow up 'plane reveals weaknesses and strength, settles problems, among an assortment of type-characters. Well done, with good detail among the artifice. The established ones in London offer a mixed choice: from the perceptive story of youth, *Blue Jeans* (9/9/59), and the verbal fireworks of *The Devil's Disciple* (16/9/59), to the cheerful empty comedy of *Ask Any Girl* (23/9/59), the more "angled" comedy of *I'm All Right, Jack* (26/8/59), and the bunch of short stories *Gold of Naples* (23/9/59).

Not one of the releases was written about at length here, though I took disrespectful note of *Upstairs and Downstairs* ("Survey," 9/9/59). For three-quarters of its length *The Man Who Understood Women* is infinitely better, amusing, well-written, well-played . . . and then it goes to sentimental pieces, probably at the behest of some financier in the front office.

— RICHARD MALLETT

ON THE AIR

Big Names, Little Scripts

I HAVE read a good deal of what seems to me to be extravagant praise for a thriller play called *The Scent of Fear* (ABC), which appeared some weeks ago. Almost without exception the critics, having expressed their astonishment that Ted Willis should have found time to write it at all in the midst of his other literary chores, hailed this work as a masterpiece of suspense, which it was not. It has often occurred to me over the past few years that the ladies and gentlemen of the press who pass judgment on the varied doings of the little screen are daily in danger of lowering their own critical standards further and further towards the level of the average mass-viewer, who is rising fifteen and communicates chiefly in tribal grunts. For the sake of the future well-being of the human race they should not do this, and I beg them to guard against it while there is still time.

As to Mr. Willis's play, I think I may say that I can recognize a masterpiece of suspense when I see one, and am likely to enjoy it at least as much as the next man. But *The Scent of Fear* (which concerned, in case you have forgotten this memorable work already, a stowaway being concealed on a British 'plane by the air hostess because . . . because . . . well, because he was nice, and the Communist devils were after him) struck me as being a humdrum example of the genre, redeemed to some extent by performances from Dorothy Tutin and Anthony Quayle which gave off a hearteningly professional gloss. The dialogue with which they so creditably dealt was as

predictable as the plot, and the whole thing just about scraped through—on its own level, which is not high. Why the fuss?

Just as Miss Tutin and Mr. Quayle added unexpected lustre to *The Scent of Fear*, I suppose Messrs. De Sica, Hawkins, Conte and Dailey may be said to be lifting *The Four Just Men* (ATV) from its rut. Without them this series would take its rightful place down there alongside *The Invisible Man*, merging unnoticed into the general TV background of deadly dull strip-cartoon escapism. With them it will probably appear to the unsophisticated viewer to be packed with ideas above its station. But it is not enough to employ first-rate actors in scripts made from threadbare nonsense: the nonsense itself should be made acceptable by first-rate writers. The history of thrillers shows that this can be done, and I don't see why both ITV and the BBC should not spend a little more time and money in keeping alive or developing the tradition of Walpole, Priestley and Greene, to name but a few.

The "Last Night of the Proms" is probably an annual event of the highest significance, demonstrating that the Royal Albert Hall holds a large number of people, that there will always be an England so long as the wearing of carnival hats remains an outward sign of a love for serious music, that Sir Malcolm Sargent is an enduring idol, and that the BBC Symphony Orchestra (leader Paul Beard) can play the Sailor's Hornpipe at the very devil of a lick. I am beginning to doubt, though, whether the BBC should continue to present a whole hour of this sedate jamboree on television year after year. After all, other things happen during the Prom season. Why not let us have just a few more odd half-hours from the regular concerts? Or quarters of an hour? Ten minutes? I tell you frankly, I am getting heartily sick of "Rule, Britannia!"; and some of those dear little junketing promenaders are too camera-conscious by half.

Welcome to Peter Scott with another "Faraway Look" (BBC). Television has played a notable part in the development of the filmed nature documentary, and Mr. Scott, with his controlled enthusiasm (so much less nerve-racking than the girlish cooing of Michaela Denis), must take his place as one of the masters of the craft.

Welcome, too, to the latest batch of deadpan television comics—the Prime Minister and his Natty Waxwork Models, whose smug chat on the night of September 19 was nearly as funny as Jack Benny and Phil Silvers (BBC) two days earlier. On second thoughts, though, perhaps it wasn't funny at all. In fact the more I think of it the more frightened I become.

— HENRY TURTON

Back from Newbury

By JACK WALSH

"**L**OOK," he said, leaning across the table. "I been in this game fifty years, mate."

The remark seemed to be addressed to me as much as to anyone else, so I registered what I hoped was slight though polite incredulity. He looked about fifty-five.

"Backing horses!" His scorn was evident. "Backing horses!" he said. "You people ought to have your heads examined."

The tone was not jocular, and indeed our friend looked distinctly peeved. No doubt he wanted a good old argument. Well, he wasn't having me.

I edged a glance at my neighbour in the dining car. Now he seemed the type who might bite. Then the train gave a lurch and gratefully I concentrated on steadying my cup of tea.

"You can't win money at this game, mate. I can't win money—never mind you. And I been in it fifty years."

The silence did not deter him. He went on:

"Gilt-edged! That's what they're on. Six-to-four *on*? In a field of nineteen? And it gets beat? They can't lose, I tell you."

He looked extremely bad-tempered. Occasionally a bookmaker perambulating up the gangway—for it was a first-class carriage—chivvied him.

"Hundred-and-forty you owe me, Knocker, is it?" (They didn't call him "Knocker" and I can't remember what they did. No matter, "Knocker" suits him well enough.)

Or one of them would playfully grab his race-card, covered as it was in hieroglyphics, and say:

"Poor returns to-day, eh, Knocker?"

Always he brushed them aside with a gesture of irritation, making no remark, his florid face getting even redder.

"They won't leave me alone," he burst out after it had happened for about the fourth time. "I want to be on me own, and they just won't leave me alone."

I knew how he felt!

He resumed.

"Look," he said. "Ever go round to the paddock?"

I made the sort of cautious gesture which could mean Yes, or No, or Sometimes.

He shook his head, pityingly.

"I never been round to the paddock in my life. Not once! And I been in it fifty years! Don't know the back of a horse from the front. Don't want to, boy."

I glanced again at the man on my right. And sure enough he bit.

"Oh, I don't know," he said, rather meekly, although he was a very big man

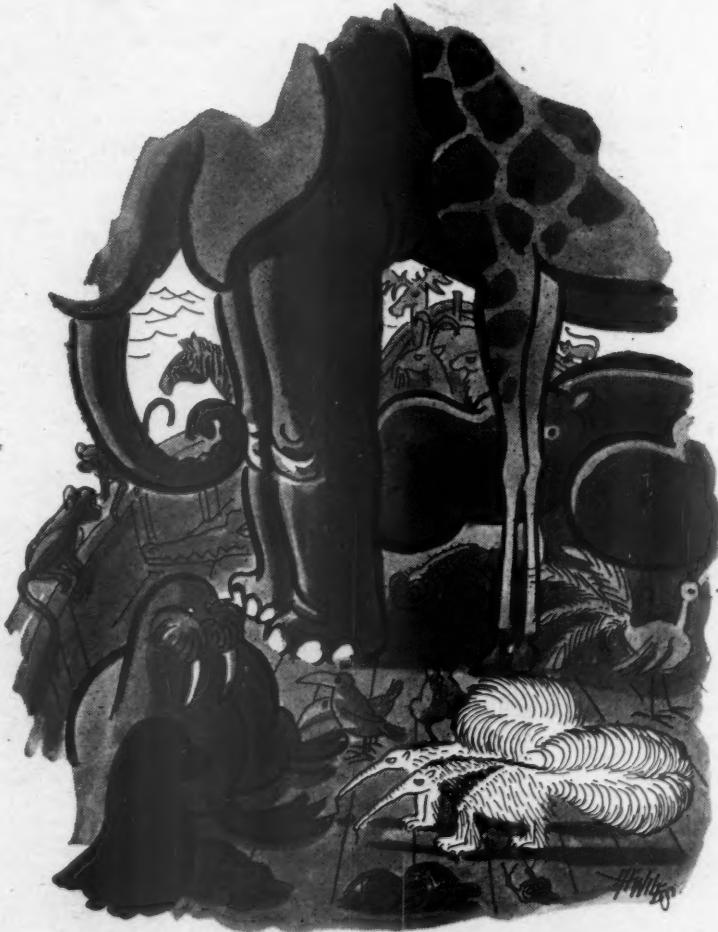
indeed. "You can often tell whether a horse is really fit or not. To-day, for instance, take Yucatan . . ."

The voluble one sat back in astonishment, eyebrows reaching up to the top of the car. He looked around on all sides, as if he could hardly believe his ears.

"Oh, what a STOOPID man!" he exclaimed.

It must be a current, acceptable sort of remark, for the big man only flushed.

"See!" said Knocker. "That's what



"We'd better lie low—those ants are bound to be missed sooner or later."

I'm trying to tell you." He indicated the newspapers lying around: "You study those papers . . . all propaganda . . . you go around to the paddock to see the be-yutiful horses! And then you think you can win money! At this game! Aooow, STOOPID man!"

And he shook his head sadly from side to side.

All the time I had been trying to make up my mind whether he himself was a bookie—or what? He had the look: Bond Street suit on an Aldgate frame; mouth large enough to allow out the loudest of noises; *meanly* prosperous.

But his next remark left me in no doubt about his occupation.

"Look," he said. "I wouldn't put thruppence on a horse. Not thrupence!" Then, in seeming contradiction: "I put hundreds on. Every day. Five hundred . . . eight hundred . . . I've put a thousand on. A thousand! Not for *me*, though. Not b—— likely! I wouldn't put thruppence on one of 'em. And fifty years I been in it!"

So he was a professional backer, a commission-worker! This was too good to be true. Right enough, he had been working steadily, though disgruntledly, at figures for a quarter of an hour after the train had left Newbury, and before conversation broke out.

So I sat up now to catch as much as I could, wondering the while why all

the advice was coming. For this is normally a silent breed, too busy in the realm of higher mathematics normally to bother with the hoi-polloi. Rare birds indeed, and here was a voluble one.

This time I did not glance away as he leaned across. He studied me for a bit, wondering no doubt whether I was worth the trouble. But it seemed he had to talk to someone.

"Look," he said finally. "Last year. Know how many odds-on favourites went down the pan on a Saturday? On a Saturday, mind!" (We got his point: more people in Britain bet on Saturdays than any other day.) "I'll tell you! More than the rest of the year put together, that's all!"

"How do you account for that then?" I asked, simple as you like. And then, seeing his eyebrows shoot up and that exclamatory label hovering on his thick lips, I sprang in again quickly. "You mean . . ."

"I mean," he said, with a superb effort to control his patience, and started on a most libellous explanation of the get-togethers in dark corners of jockeys and bookmakers.

"Look at to-day!" he went on, mentioning a certain race. "Whatsisname's horse should have been two to one *on*. Well, shouldn't he? And what did he *start* at? Odds *against*! Well, I ask you! Oh, I smelt it, boy! They

come up to me and whisper 'So-and-so's is "off" to-day, Knock'er! Me! But, in here' (he indicated his right ear) "and out here" (his left), "that's where it goes!"

He did another head-waggle.

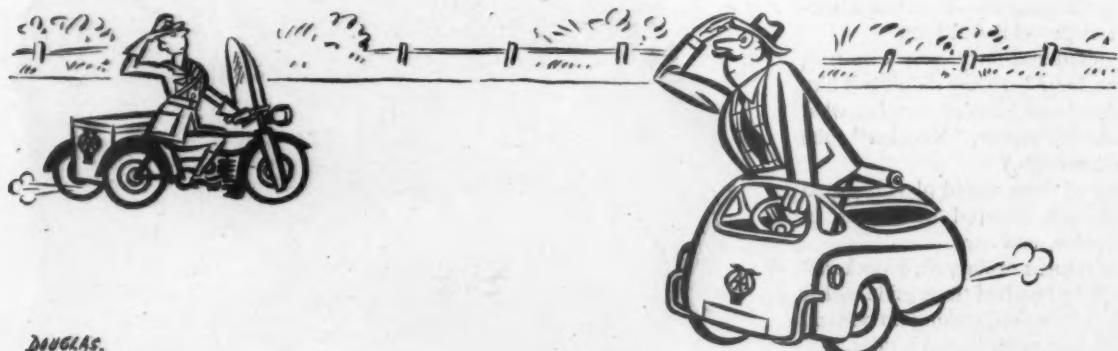
"They're clever, though. Oh, they're b—— clever. I'll say that for 'em. You can't win money. I can't win money. And I been in it fifty years!"

It would of course have been an appropriate moment to tell our friend that one was well aware of the fact; that some people actually liked the sport and that sometimes they were prepared even to sacrifice a bit in pursuit of their pleasure.

Such thinking, however, would sure to have drawn an even more scathing comment than merely "stoopid," so I kept mum.

According to our friend—and I don't altogether doubt him—there are more outward signs of what he called the "fix"; but now we were nearly in Paddington and he obviously did not consider it worth while enlarging on the subject. It was sufficient to stand in front of the "Book"—if you could *read*. And his doubts about our ability to do that simple exercise were plainly written on his still peevish face as the train pulled in to the station.

I always wanted to meet a King of the Racing Jungle, but, gracious me, how they do bellow when they are hurt!



Douglas.

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